



**EXPERIENTIAL TESTIMONIES
BEFORE THE JUDGMENT SEAT
OF CHRIST**

VOLUME 4

THE CHURCH OF ALMIGHTY GOD



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1. How I Left My Negative Emotion Behind

By Daisy, USA

In October 2022, Shelley and I were selected as church leaders. Since we just started to practice and were unfamiliar with many tasks, we would always discuss matters together. After some time, our work started to show some results. Shelley had relatively good caliber. Whenever the leader asked questions, she could respond quickly. Most of the time, the leader would also acknowledge her. As a result, the leader would prioritize seeking Shelley's suggestions on many matters, while I seemed like a dispensable person sitting on the side. I thought to myself, "Shelley has good caliber and the leader thinks relatively highly of her, whereas I go a long time without saying anything. The leader has probably seen through to my lack of ability and thinks I can only do some auxiliary work." I felt a bit despondent, but then I thought that since I just started to practice and my caliber was not that good, it was normal for me not to be used for important work. I consoled myself and the feeling passed.

Later on, the amount of work we were responsible for increased. When assigning work, the leader would call on both of us. But when it came to implementing some more challenging tasks, the leader would specifically ask Shelley to follow up on them, rarely mentioning my name. At most, the leader would end with, "Shelley, you and the others can follow up on this task." Outwardly, I pretended not to care, but inwardly, I was in turmoil: "I'm always the overlooked one, merely a part of the 'others.' I don't seem to exist at all in the leader's mind. There is nothing I can do; after all, my caliber is not as good as Shelley's. I'll just do what I can." Subsequently, I became increasingly passive in following up on tasks and didn't want to get involved much in the work Shelley was responsible for. When she came to

discuss work with me, I would respond half-heartedly. Sometimes everyone would actively discuss a problem, and I felt like an outsider, hardly saying a word all afternoon. Sometimes I had some ideas, but I wasn't sure whether they were actually correct. If I said something wrong, wouldn't I make a fool of myself? After thinking it over, I decided not to speak up. In this way, I increasingly felt that I had poor caliber and was not of much use, so I no longer wanted to be responsible for so much work. I then shifted my focus to the watering work. At that time, the church lacked a watering group leader, and I thought of Sister Rose, who had previously gotten some results in watering new believers. However, the brothers and sisters reported that she didn't bear a burden in her duty and was not suited to be a group leader. I wanted to discuss this with Shelley, but seeing how busy she was, I didn't bring it up with her, fearing she might say that my caliber was too poor since I was unable to handle even this small task. I thought, "Rose has good caliber and can fellowship to resolve some problems. Though she might not bear a burden now due to being constrained by her husband, with more follow-up and fellowship from me, it shouldn't delay the work." So, I selected Rose as the watering group leader. But a few days later, I learned that Rose gave up her duties and went home due to being constrained by her husband. Upon hearing this, I felt paralyzed, thinking, "This is it. I chose her. Doesn't this show that I have no discernment? I made mistakes even when working independently on a small task; this is really terrible. If this delayed the watering of new believers, I would be disrupting the church's work." The more I thought about it, the worse I felt, believing I was incapable of doing anything well. Since I lacked the caliber and discernment, and couldn't see things clearly, I should quickly resign before causing more harm to the brothers and sisters and delaying the church's work. So, I wrote my resignation letter and sent it to the leader and Shelley.

Shortly after, Shelley sent me a passage of God's words: **"Regardless of the situation or work environment, people sometimes make mistakes, and there are areas where their caliber, insights, and perspectives fall short. This is normal, and you need to learn how to handle it correctly. In any case, no matter what your practice is, you should face and handle it correctly and actively. Do not become depressed or feel negative or repressed when faced with a bit of difficulty, and do not fall into negative emotions. There's no need for all of that, don't make it into a big deal. What you should do is immediately reflect on yourself, and determine if there is an issue with your professional skills or a problem with your intentions. Examine if there are any impurities in your actions or if certain notions are to blame. Reflect on all aspects. If it is a problem with a lack of proficiency, you can continue learning, find somebody to help you explore solutions, or consult with people in the same field. If there are some wrong intentions in the mix, involving a problem that may be resolved using the truth, you can seek out church leaders or someone who understands the truth for consultation and fellowship. Talk with them about the state you are in and let them help you resolve it. If it is an issue involving notions, once you have examined and realized them, you can dissect and understand them, then turn away from and rebel against them. Isn't that all there is to it? The days ahead still await you, the sun will rise again tomorrow, and you have to go on living. Since you are alive, since you are human, you should continue to perform your duty. As long as you are alive and have thoughts, you should strive to fulfill your duty and complete it. This is a goal that should never change throughout a person's life. No matter when, no matter what difficulties you encounter, no matter what you face, you should not feel repressed. If you feel repressed, you will**

stagnate and be defeated. What kind of people always feel repressed?

Weaklings and fools are often repressed” (The Word, Vol. 6. On the Pursuit of the

Truth I. How to Pursue the Truth (6)). After reading God’s words, I felt very warm inside. God said that when people do their duties, there are times when they may be confused, make mistakes, or violate principles due to a lack of understanding of the truth. So, when problems arise that cause some losses to the work, or when people are pruned, these are all normal and should be treated correctly. The key is to learn lessons from failures, reflect upon oneself, repent, and change. If losses to the work are caused by acting according to corrupt dispositions, then one should seek the truth to resolve the corrupt dispositions. If the work is ineffective due to lack of skills, one should quickly learn them or consult with someone more skilled. If, just because of the appearance of these deviations or mistakes, one thinks that they are revealed and thus becomes negative and delimits themselves and is even unwilling to do their duties, this shows they are foolish and weak. I reflected on the issues with choosing Rose and realized that I was too concerned with my own reputation and status. During the time of cooperating with Shelley, since I felt overshadowed everywhere, I wanted to accomplish a task independently to prove that I still had some working abilities. Therefore, in the case of selecting a watering group leader, though I clearly lacked principles and could not discern people, because I was afraid that if I asked brothers and sisters, they might think that I was really incompetent since I couldn’t handle even such a small task, I chose Rose according to my own imagination. I lacked discernment of people and didn’t follow principles in selecting and using them. Actually, God’s house has long fellowshiped that when choosing and using people, we should consult and ask those who know their backgrounds to ensure the selected ones have a sense of responsibility and some calibers before cultivating

them, and that once an issue with a person is discovered, we should immediately investigate to understand the situation. If we cannot see it clearly, we should seek from someone who understands the truth. Only in this way can our selection and using of people be more accurate. However, for the sake of protecting my vanity and status, I promoted Rose according to my own will. I was acting arbitrarily and being seriously irresponsible for the work. Now that the work had been delayed, I should quickly think of ways to resolve the problem rather than sinking in despondency and writing myself off. I was avoiding my responsibility by doing so. I was so selfish!

At a gathering, I read a passage of God's words that was very helpful to me. Almighty God says: **"If you are a person with resolve, if you can treat the responsibilities and obligations that people should bear, the things that people with normal humanity must achieve, and those things that adults must accomplish as the aims and goals of your pursuit, and if you can shoulder your responsibilities, then no matter what price you pay and what pain you endure, you will not complain, and as long as you recognize it as God's requirements and intentions, you will be able to endure any suffering and fulfill your duty well. At that time, what would your state of mind be like? It would be different; you would feel peace and stability in your heart, and you would experience enjoyment. You see, just by seeking to live out normal humanity, and pursuing the responsibilities, obligations, and mission that people with normal humanity ought to bear and undertake, people feel peace and joy in their hearts, and they experience enjoyment. They have not even reached the point where they are conducting affairs according to the principles and obtaining the truth, and they have already undergone some change. Such people are those who possess conscience and reason; they are upright people who can overcome any**

difficulty and undertake any task. They are the good soldiers of Christ, they have gone through training, and no difficulty can defeat them. Tell Me, what do you think of such comportment? Do these people not have fortitude? (They do.) They do have fortitude, and people admire them. Would such people still feel repressed? (No.) Then how did they change these repressive emotions? For what reason will these emotions of repression neither trouble them nor find them? (It is because they love positive things and bear a burden in their duties.) That's right, it is about attending to one's proper work. ... If a person attends to their proper work and follows the right path, these emotions will not arise. Even if they experience repressive emotions occasionally due to temporary special circumstances, they will only be passing moods, because people with the correct way of life and the right perspective on existence will quickly override these negative emotions. As a result, you will not frequently find yourself trapped in emotions of repression. This means that such emotions of repression will not bother you. You may experience temporary bad moods, but you will not be trapped in them. This highlights the importance of pursuing the truth. If you seek to attend to your proper work, if you bear the responsibilities that adults should bear, and seek to have a normal, good, positive, and proactive mode of existence, then you will not develop these negative emotions. These repressive emotions will not find you or cling to you" (The Word, Vol.

6. On the Pursuit of the Truth I. How to Pursue the Truth (5)). After reading God's words I felt very ashamed. From God's words, I saw that adults and those who attend to the proper work keep their minds on proper matters. Every day, what they think about is things related to their duties, such as how to do their duties well, what problems still exist in their duties, how to do their work better, and so on. Even if there may be some deviations or mistakes in

their duties, and they may face setbacks and become weak or despondent for a while, they do not remain in negative emotions all along, but instead, they will actively seek the truth to resolve their problems. However, right now, I was just like a useless person who could not shoulder responsibilities. Facing some setbacks, I became negative and gave up, without a bit of the fortitude an adult should have. Additionally, this also exposed how I failed to attend to what I should be doing lately. Since taking on the church work, seeing that the sister I worked with was better than me in various aspects, I felt that I lacked caliber and was unappreciated. So, I really hoped for an opportunity to prove my abilities. When the leader had gatherings with us, I constantly observed her expressions and tried to judge from her tone whether she valued me. If the leader specifically asked me to do some work, I felt happy, thinking that the leader valued me, and I had the motivation to do my duties. But if the leader assigned the main responsibilities to my partnered sister, I felt undervalued. My desire for reputation and status left me feeling distressed when unmet. While I cooperated with brothers and sisters, my thoughts were not on my duties but on how much they agreed with what I said. Sometimes, when I shared a viewpoint and no one responded, I felt uncomfortable. If they offered opposing suggestions, I became even more negative and determined that my caliber was too low, being even unwilling to participate in the discussion. Especially regarding the matter with Rose, I acted recklessly according to my own will despite a lack of discernment, and didn't reflect upon myself after making a mistake, but fell into negative emotions and wanted to resign. This was all because I didn't attend to the proper work in doing my duties, but always pursued reputation and status. My eyes and thoughts were focused on nothing but my reputation and status. When I didn't receive people's admiration, I became negative and distressed, even putting

the church work aside. I couldn't do my duty well at all in this way. This attitude was really loathed by God. I remembered God said: **“Especially for those who are currently performing their duties in God’s house, is there any time for them to feel repressed? There is no time. So, what is the matter with those who feel repressed, get into bad moods, and feel low-spirited or depressed whenever they encounter something a little unpleasant? It is that they are not occupying themselves with the right things and they are idle”** (The Word, Vol. 6. On the Pursuit of the Truth I. How to Pursue the Truth (5)). Seeing that the brothers and sisters around me were all busy doing their duties while I remained caught up in concerns about my reputation and status without seeking the truth to resolve these issues, instead becoming more negative and resistant, I realized that I was not someone who pursues the truth. Particularly when I thought about how Shelley mentioned that the results of the gospel work she was responsible for weren't good, and everyone lived in difficulties, and that she really hoped that we could be of one mind and heart to overcome these difficulties together, I felt very guilty and distressed inside. God arranged the environment for us to cooperate together to be responsible for the church work, but instead of focusing on how to do my duties well, I was lost in my petty thoughts, became negative and withdrawn, and wanted to resign. I was really lacking in humanity! I prayed to God, “God, I am too selfish. There are so many difficulties in the church work right now, yet I didn't mind the proper matters but competed with the sister every day. When I couldn't be better than her, I became negative. I feel like a cesspool inside, devoid of any positive pursuits. I am not only suffering myself but also delaying the church work. Now I have realized my problems. Although my caliber is not very good, I should do my best to cooperate and work harmoniously with the sister. At the very least, I shouldn't cause delays in

the work because of my attitude. May You scrutinize my heart; I am willing to repent!” After that, my attitude toward doing my duties became more active. I started to proactively discuss and solve problems at work with Shelley. For some difficult tasks that I used to be afraid of, I prayed to God and participated as much as I could. When I noticed difficulties in others’ duties, if I couldn’t offer much help, I would find someone who understood the truth to cooperate on resolving them. Sometimes, even though the leader specifically assigned Shelley to follow up on a task, without mentioning my name, as long as Shelley communicated with me, I would participate and offer suggestions, without caring whether the leader would notice it or not. I practiced doing things before God, focusing on doing each task conscientiously, and believing that practicing the truth and satisfying God was key. When I consciously rebelled against my own intentions and focused my heart on my duties every day, I felt steadfast and started to come out of my negative emotions a bit.

After some time, I encountered a pruning and fell back into negative emotions. At that time, the leader asked me to organize some materials. Lacking experience, I cooperated with brothers and sisters to do it. After we finished the draft, the leader thought it was good after reading it, but suggested adding some details in some places. I was pleased when seeing there were no big problems, thinking it was a well-done task, the additional details would be easy to add, and it would be satisfactory to add only a bit more content. So, I didn’t fellowship the principles with the brothers and sisters. Unexpectedly, after the additions, the leader found the new content long-winded and incoherent, which made the content worse. She asked whether we had carefully pondered and clearly understood what the problem was. Then she asked others to reorganize the materials. Hearing this, I was stunned, “I wanted to do it well, but why did it end up like this?”

Reflecting on it, I felt it was still due to my poor caliber and shallow understanding of the truth. I thought I could handle some general affairs, but when it came to the job that required the understanding of the truth, I was not up to it. Now, it wasn't that I intentionally wanted to step back; I truly had the will but lacked the competency. Afterward, I became hesitant in cooperating with the work. When I noticed some problems at work, I would want to point them out but then I would deny myself, thinking, "With my poor caliber, can I even spot problems? Am I capable of this job? My caliber is poor and I am inadequate in discerning things, otherwise, the work would not have been done so badly; so, I'd better not point out problems for others." Consequently, I fell back into negative emotions, becoming passive in my duties, constantly worrying about my future and prospects, and was unable to quiet my heart.

Until one gathering, I read a passage of God's words that helped improve my state. Almighty God says: **"All the things that arise each day, big or small, that can shake your resolution, occupy your heart, or constrain your ability to do your duty and your forward progress require diligent treatment; you should examine them carefully and seek the truth. These are all problems that must be solved as you experience. Some people become negative, complain, and quit their duties when they run into difficulties, and they are unable to crawl back to their feet after each setback. All these people are fools who do not love the truth, and they would not gain it with even a lifetime of faith. How could such fools follow to the end? If the same thing happens to you ten times, but you gain nothing from it, then you are a mediocre, useless person. Astute people and those of true caliber who have spiritual understanding are seekers of the truth; should something happen to them ten times, then, in perhaps eight of those cases, they would be able**

to gain some enlightenment, learn some lesson, understand some truth, and make some progress. When things befall a fool ten times—one who does not have spiritual understanding—not once will it benefit their life, not once will it change them, and not once will it cause them to know their ugly face, in which case it is over for them. Each time something happens to them, they fall down, and each time they fall down, they need someone else to support them and coax them; without support and coaxing, they cannot rise, and each time something happens, they are in danger of falling and of being degraded. Is this not the end for them? Are there any other grounds for such useless people to be saved? God's salvation of mankind is a salvation of those who love the truth, a salvation of the part of them with will and resolve, and the part of them that yearns for truth and justice in their hearts. A person's resolve is the part of them in their heart that yearns for justice, goodness, and truth, and is possessed of conscience. God saves this part of people, and through it, He changes their corrupt disposition, so that they may understand and gain the truth, so that their corruption may be cleansed, and their life disposition may be transformed. If you do not have these things within you, you cannot be saved. ... Some people feel that their caliber is too low and that they lack the comprehension ability, so they delimit themselves, and they feel that no matter how much they pursue the truth, they will not be able to meet God's requirements. They think that no matter how hard they try, it's useless, and that's all there is to it, so they are always negative, and as a result, even after years of believing in God, they haven't gained any truth. Without doing the hard work to pursue the truth, you say that your caliber is too poor, you give up on yourself, and you always live in a negative state. As a result, you don't understand the truth that

you should understand or practice the truth within your ability—aren't you the one hindering yourself? If you always say that your caliber isn't good enough, isn't this evading and shirking responsibility? If you can suffer, pay a price, and gain the work of the Holy Spirit, then you will inevitably be able to understand some truths and enter into some realities. If you don't look to or rely on God, and you give up on yourself without putting in any effort or paying a price, and simply surrender, then you are a good-for-nothing, and lack a shred of conscience and reason. No matter whether your caliber is poor or outstanding, if you have a bit of conscience and reason, you should properly complete what you ought to do and your mission; being a deserter is a terrible thing and a betrayal of God. This is irredeemable. Pursuing the truth requires a firm will, and people who are too negative or weak will accomplish nothing. They will not be able to believe in God until the end, and, if they wish to obtain the truth and achieve a change of disposition, they have less hope still. Only those who are resolved and pursue the truth can obtain it and be perfected by God" (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. Part Three). After reading God's words, I related them to myself. I realized that when faced with setbacks and failures, I was always particularly fragile and negative, feeling like a crumpled piece of paper. My first reaction was always to think, "Let others handle it," or "My caliber is too low," and then I pushed the work onto others to resolve. I seemed to be sensible and have self-awareness by doing so, but actually, I was delimiting myself and giving up on myself. It showed that I was not accepting or loving the truth. When we are faced with setbacks and failures, God wants us to seek the truth to solve problems and make progress. It is through our will and longing for justice that God perfects us. People who love the truth and have good caliber are

proactive. They are good at summarizing experiences from failures, examining their lacking, and can understand some truths through seeking, gain some knowledge of themselves, and make progress in life. This time, when I encountered pruning, I didn't analyze the reasons for my failure but instead made excuses. I felt it wasn't because I didn't want to do well, but rather that my poor caliber led to so many problems in doing my duties. The implication was that I had done my best within my capabilities and had nothing to reflect on. But upon closer examination, was it true that I really had no problems at all? When the leader pointed out that the materials lacked details, I didn't ponder or seek but added a lot of unnecessary content based on my imagination, making the revised materials overly lengthy and trivial. I didn't seek principles or think about how to achieve better results; I just followed the rules mechanically. This approach to doing my duties was just going through the motions. I should quickly summarize and correct my approach. I already lacked caliber, and if I even lacked the proactive mindset and just retreated passively whenever I faced difficulties, then it would be hard for me to improve.

Later, I pondered why I always wanted to escape when faced with setbacks and failures. After much thought, I realized that it was because my concern for reputation and status was too heavy, and the path I walked in my faith in God was not correct. I recalled a passage where God dissects antichrists. God's words say: **“Antichrists’ cherishment of their reputation and status goes beyond that of normal people, and is something within their disposition essence; it is not a temporary interest, or the transient effect of their surroundings—it is something within their life, their bones, and so it is their essence. This is to say that in everything antichrists do, their first consideration is their own reputation and status, nothing else. For antichrists, reputation and**

status are their life, and their lifelong goal. In all they do, their first consideration is: ‘What will happen to my status? And to my reputation? Will doing this give me a good reputation? Will it elevate my status in people’s minds?’ That is the first thing they think about, which is ample proof that they have the disposition and essence of antichrists; they would not consider these problems otherwise. It can be said that for antichrists, reputation and status are not some additional requirement, much less something extraneous that they could do without. They are part of the nature of antichrists, they are in their bones, in their blood, they are innate to them. Antichrists are not indifferent toward whether they possess reputation and status; this is not their attitude. Then, what is their attitude? Reputation and status are intimately connected to their daily lives, to their daily state, to what they pursue on a daily basis. And so for antichrists, status and reputation are their life. No matter how they live, no matter what environment they live in, no matter what work they do, no matter what they pursue, what their goals are, what their life’s direction is, it all revolves around having a good reputation and a high status. And this aim does not change; they can never put aside such things. This is the true face of antichrists, and their essence” (The Word, Vol. 4. Exposing Antichrists. Item Nine (Part Three)). God says that antichrists cherish their reputation and status more than normal people, and that reputation and status are their lifelong pursuits and the starting point and goal of everything they do. When people look up to them and praise them, they are motivated to perform their duties and are willing to do anything. But once they lose people’s admiration, they become negative and slack off, even feeling that believing in God and doing their duties is meaningless. My views on pursuit were the same as those of antichrists. When my opinions could be

recognized and adopted by everyone, I could do some work proactively. However, when the sister I worked with was valued and I was always ignored, I felt very lost and dejected, losing motivation in my duties. When I faced more failures, I further delimited myself as lacking caliber and unfit for the work, wanting to escape. I always thought that I wanted to resign because I was really incompetent for this work, and it showed I had self-awareness, but actually, it was because I valued my reputation and status too much. I knew that doing this duty would make it difficult for me to hold my head high, and if I continued in this duty, I would likely fail and be revealed many more times, and others would see through me completely. So, I wanted to switch to a simpler duty to maintain my reputation and status. All along, whether it was choosing a duty, or where to study or work, my primary criterion was whether it could make me look good and stand out. When applying for college, there was a university with a good major and another with a relatively weaker one. However, the teachers from the latter repeatedly invited me to apply, and I felt that I would be valued there. Ultimately, I chose the university with the weaker major. During university, it was the same. I put effort into the subjects where the teachers valued me and avoided the subjects where I wasn't appreciated. Throughout my life, I had judged things based on whether they could bring me reputation and status. I liked places where I could be valued and stand out and avoided places where I would be neglected or humiliated. Now, I realized that my concern for reputation and status was deeply rooted, and it had become ingrained in me, making me constantly want to protect it. For example, now, I clearly knew that being a leader meant being revealed and pruned a lot, which was beneficial for my understanding of the truth principles and for my life entry. However, to maintain my reputation and status, I even considered giving up my duty. I saw that I valued reputation and status

more than the truth, and I revealed the disposition of being averse to the truth. If I continued to pursue this way, what would I ultimately gain? I wouldn't be able to exercise my skills or make any progress in my life entry, and in the end, I would just be a useless person whom God loathes and eliminates. It was at that time that I realized that pursuing reputation and status will lead to a dead end, and that I need to seek the truth and let go of my pursuit of reputation and status, breaking free from this state.

Later, I read a passage of God's words and found the way to practice. Almighty God says: **"What is the most important thing to focus on when believing in God? Whether someone's caliber is high or low, whether they have spiritual understanding, or what kind of pruning they face—none of this is important. What is the important thing nowadays? It's how you enter the truth realities. In order to do so, what is the most basic thing someone should have? They must have a sincere heart. What does it mean to be sincere? It means not being slippery when things befall you, not considering your own interests, not plotting and scheming with others, and not playing deceitful games with God. If you can cheat God and lack sincerity toward Him, then you're completely done for and God will not save you, so what's the point of understanding the truth? You may have spiritual understanding, be of good caliber, be eloquent, and be able to comprehend things quickly, draw inferences, and understand everything God says, but if you play deceitful games with God when things befall you, this is a satanic disposition and is very dangerous. Your caliber is of no use no matter how good it is, and God will not want you. God will say, 'You speak well, are of good caliber, are quick-witted, and have spiritual understanding, but there is just one problem—you don't love the truth.' Those who don't love the truth are troublesome, and God**

doesn't want them. A person without a good heart will be disposed of, just like how a car that looks well-maintained from the outside but has a bad engine will be completely discarded. People are like this, too: No matter how good your caliber appears to be, how smart, eloquent, or capable you are, or how good you are at handling problems, it's all no use, and this isn't the key point. So, what is the key point? It's about whether someone's heart loves the truth. It is not about listening to how they speak, but looking at how they act. God does not look at what you say or promise before Him; He looks at whether what you do has truth reality. Also, God does not care how high, profound, or mighty your actions are, and even if you do a small little thing, if God sees sincerity in your every move, He shall say, 'This person sincerely believes in Me. They have never boasted. They conduct themselves according to their station. Although they may not have made a great contribution to God's house and are of poor caliber, they are steadfast and have sincerity in all they do.' What does this 'sincerity' contain? It contains fear and submission to God, as well as true faith and love; it contains everything God wants to see. Such people may seem unremarkable to others, and they could well be a person who makes food or does the cleaning up, someone who performs an ordinary duty. Such people are unremarkable to others, haven't achieved anything great, and have nothing estimable, admirable or enviable about them—they are just ordinary people. And yet, all that God requires is found in them and lived out in them, and they give it all to God. Tell Me, what more does God want? He is satisfied with them" (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. Part Three). I used to place great importance on whether a person had caliber and gifts, believing that only those with good caliber could be greatly used in God's house. When I was repeatedly revealed as lacking

caliber and unable to see things clearly, I became negative and delimited myself, unable to even perform the tasks I was capable of. After reading God's words, I understood that believers should not focus on their level of caliber, or whether they have eloquence or sharp minds—these are not what God values. God cares about a person's heart and whether they have a sincere heart toward God and the church's work. The caliber and eloquence God gave me do not determine whether I can do my duties well. If I am eloquent and capable but shirk my responsibilities and act dishonestly in my actual practice, then no matter how good my caliber is, I am someone God detests. While caliber can assist people in doing their duties well, what is more important is a person's attitude toward the truth and their duties, whether they have a proactive and truth-loving heart, whether they can seek the truth when they fail and are revealed, learn from their experiences, and pursue growth in their life—these are what God values. In the past, some people with gifts and calibers also served as church leaders, but many did not do their duties properly. After some time, they coveted comfort and easiness, did not do actual work, or fought for fame and benefits, disrupting the church's work, and were eventually eliminated. However, some people appeared unremarkable, without gifts, with average caliber, yet they did their duties in a grounded way, seeking principles in everything, and they made progress in doing their duties without being replaced or eliminated. This shows that God is righteous, and that He does not pass verdict on a person based on their calibers but values whether they pursue and practice the truth and whether they can accomplish every work in a grounded manner and responsibly. Understanding this, I told myself in my heart that from now on, I needed to focus my mind on my duties and work conscientiously, and that as long as the work was assigned to me, I should

do it earnestly and responsibly, putting in as much effort as I could, and be a down-to-earth and reliable person who attends to their proper work.

I then began to focus on learning lessons from each failure, changing my mindset when it came to each time that I was revealed. Previously, whenever I encountered failure or pruning, I would think, “Oh, the leader must have seen through me,” or “Everyone must think I lack caliber.” When I sank in this, I would become very despondent. Later, I began to ponder why I was being revealed, what problems I could discover about myself and what deficiencies I could make up for. With this new mindset, I focused more on the right matters in my heart. Later, for a period of time, I encountered pruning successively, sometimes for low efficiency in doing things, sometimes for not grasping the principles in handling tasks, and sometimes for having a one-sided perspective for a particular matter and lacking correct understanding. So, I reflected on my problems, and sought methods to improve work efficiency if they were related to my skills, and if it was an issue of understanding, I would ponder over my own problems, examining what was wrong with my understanding, and then seek from brothers and sisters who understood the truth and had experience. When I pondered this way, my attitude toward pruning improved. Although now I still occasionally feel despondent, I no longer get stuck in it, and every day, my mind is no longer so burdened while I do my duties, and I can normally experience the circumstances I face.

Reflecting on this period of time, when I was trapped in negativity and wallowing in misery and tiredness, if it weren't for the guidance of God's words, I couldn't have left that negative emotion behind, and would have continued to degenerate, distancing myself from God, and even losing my current duties. From my heart, I thank God, for at my weakest moments, He sent me reminders through the people around me, and guided me using His

words, helping me to leave that emotion behind. From now on, I just want to settle down and do my duties to the best of my abilities.

2. The Struggle to Admit Mistakes

By Kristina, USA

Saturday, December 3, 2022, Light Rain

Today, while organizing the worksheet, I accidentally found a video that had been improperly assigned, with the production task repeated. I was very surprised. After careful inspection, I realized it was because I forgot to check the records before production. I remembered that I had made this mistake twice before because I didn't check the records. At that time, the leader criticized me for not being diligent and summarized the causes of the mistakes, telling me to avoid making the same mistake in the future. I didn't expect to make the same mistake again this time. I felt utterly weak. "I've only been a supervisor for a few days, and I've made such a low-level mistake again. If the leader finds out, how disappointed she would be in me! If she prunes and criticizes me again, how can I hold my head up?" I also remembered that a few days ago, Sister Xin Jing in our group was dismissed because she was always perfunctory in her duties. At that time, I even fellowshiped on and exposed the nature and consequences of being perfunctory in her duty. But now I've also made such a low-level mistake because of my perfunctoriness. If the brothers and sisters knew, they would definitely say that I preach the words and doctrines well but do my duties perfunctorily and have no truth reality, making me unfit to be a supervisor. The more I thought about it, the more uncomfortable I felt, and I regretted not checking carefully at the time. I was too embarrassed to admit my mistake to everyone, so I deleted the previous production record. At that moment, a phrase from God's words flashed through my mind: **"Man's words and deeds in secret remain always before My judgment seat"** (The

Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. The Work of Spreading the Gospel Is Also the

Work of Saving Man). I felt a sense of fear and trembling in my heart: God scrutinizes man's innermost being. Although I can hide this from people, I cannot deceive God. If I resort to deceit, God sees it clearly and He will condemn me. I was very scared and quickly restored the deleted record. Looking at this record was like seeing a stain that could not be erased. But I really didn't have the courage to admit my mistake to the leader. I thought that if I didn't say anything, no one would find out, so I quickly closed the worksheet.

At night, I tossed and turned in bed, unable to sleep, feeling uneasy. I clearly made a mistake that caused a loss to the work, yet I pretended to not know about it and did not plan to tell the leader about this issue. I was being brazenly deceptive! Later, I read this in God's words: **"God does not perfect those who are deceitful. If your heart is not honest—if you are not an honest person—then you will not be gained by God. Likewise, you will not gain the truth, and will also be incapable of gaining God. What does it mean if you do not gain God? If you do not gain God and you have not understood the truth, then you will not know God, and so there will be no way you can be compatible with God, in which case you are the enemy of God. If you are incompatible with God, God is not your God; and if God is not your God, you cannot be saved. If you do not seek to attain salvation, why do you believe in God? If you cannot attain salvation, you will forever be a bitter enemy of God, and your outcome will be set. Thus, if people wish to be saved, then they must start by being honest. In the end, those who are gained by God are marked with a sign. Do you know what it is? It is written in Revelation, in the Bible: 'And in their mouth was found no lie; they are without blemish' (Revelation 14:5). Who are 'they'? They are those who are saved, perfected and gained by God. How does God describe these people?**

What are the characteristics and expressions of their conduct? They are without blemish. They speak no lies. You can probably all understand and grasp what speaking no lies means: It means being honest” (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. Six Indicators of Life Growth). **“Everyone has a deceitful disposition; the only difference is in how severe it is. Though you may open your heart and fellowship your problems in gatherings, does that mean that you do not have a deceitful disposition? It does not, you have one as well. Why do I say this? Here is an example: You may be able to open yourself up in fellowship about things that do not touch on your pride or vanity, things that are not shameful, and things that you will not be pruned for—but if you had done something that violates the truth principles, something that everyone would loathe and be revolted by, would you be able to fellowship openly about it in gatherings? And if you had done something unspeakable, it would be even harder for you to open up and reveal the truth about it. Were someone to look into it or try to assign blame for it, you would use all means at your disposal to hide it, and you would be terrified that this matter might be exposed. You would always be trying to cover it up and get away with it. Is this not a deceitful disposition? You may believe that if you do not say it out loud, no one will know of it, and that even God will have no way to know of it. That is mistaken! God scrutinizes people’s innermost hearts. If you cannot perceive this, you do not know God at all. Deceitful people do not merely trick others—they even dare to try to trick God and use deceitful means to resist Him. Can such people attain God’s salvation? God’s disposition is righteous and holy, and deceitful people are what He loathes most. So, deceitful people are those for whom it is hardest to attain salvation. People with a deceitful nature are those who lie the**

most. They will even lie to God and try to trick Him, and they are obstinately unrepentant. This means that they cannot attain God's salvation'' (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. Only Knowledge of the Six Kinds of Corrupt Dispositions Is True Self-Knowledge). Comparing God's words to my thoughts and actions after making the mistake, I realized I was revealing a deceitful disposition. It was a fact that I did my duties perfunctorily, resulting in repeated work and wasting human and material resources. I should be an honest person and truthfully admit my mistake to the leader and take responsibility. But I feared the leader and the brothers and sisters would look down on me, so I resorted to covering up my mistake by deleting the previous production record, thinking this would prevent anyone from discovering the problem. Although I restored the record later, I still didn't want to admit my mistake, hoping to let it pass unnoticed; as long as no one discovered it later, the matter could just be left unsettled. If someone did find out about it later, I could say I noticed it at the time but forgot to mention it, not that I was intentionally hiding it. This way, I could cover up my mistake without appearing deceptive. I was so deceitful! God's essence is holy, and He likes honest people and loathes deceitful people. Despite knowing that God scrutinizes everything, I still engaged in deceit and trickery. My actions disgusted God. If I didn't repent and become an honest person, no matter how much I outwardly sacrificed, I wouldn't be saved in the end. However, admitting my mistake to the leader was so humiliating. I was afraid the leader would be disappointed in me and prune me, and I lacked the courage to speak up. I felt conflicted and painful in my heart.

Monday, December 5, 2022, Overcast

Two days have passed, and I still don't have the courage to tell the leader. Over these past two days, I have desperately wanted to erase this incident from my memory; then I wouldn't have to admit my mistake and

face embarrassment. I have thrown myself entirely into my work, which temporarily helps me forget about this incident. However, when I have a moment of downtime, I can't help but think about it again. This mistake clings to me like a nightmare. No matter whether I'm eating, cleaning, or walking, thinking about it makes my heart ache as if it's being twisted. It's like there's a voice in my head constantly accusing me: "You are not an honest person; you cannot be saved." At night, I cannot sleep soundly either, and my heart is in torment. I think of God's words: **"In short, to be honest is to be pure in your actions and words, and to deceive neither God nor man. What I say is very simple, but to you it is doubly arduous. Many people would rather be condemned to hell than speak and act honestly. Little wonder that I have other treatment in store for those who are dishonest"** (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. Three Admonitions). When I read these words of God before, I didn't quite understand. I thought, "Is it really that hard to be an honest person? God clearly says that if we don't become honest people, we can't be saved. Since I know the consequences, to be saved and enter the kingdom of heaven, I should speak and act honestly according to God's words, no matter what suffering I endure. This shouldn't be difficult! Besides, I have a straightforward personality by nature; I'm quick to speak my mind, so being honest and telling the truth shouldn't be hard for me." But in the revelation of facts, I realized that being an honest person isn't as simple as I thought. I don't even have the courage to admit my own mistake. To save my pride and status, I even resorted to tricks to cover up the fact. Despite knowing clearly that I can't be saved without being honest, I still don't want to admit my mistake. Aren't I the kind of person God describes as one who would rather be condemned to hell than speak honestly? I think about how I've believed in God for over ten years but still can't even be an honest

person in this small matter, nor can I truthfully admit my mistake. I don't possess the slightest truth reality! I feel very discouraged and disappointed in myself. I always proclaim that I want to practice the truth, but when faced with something that concerns my pride and status, I knowingly fail to practice it. I'm in a low mood and don't want to talk to the brothers and sisters; I always feel that I don't practice the truth and am not an honest person, so I have no face to see them. At night, before sleeping, with tears in my eyes, I pray to God, pouring out the pain from my heart: "God, I see how pitiful I am. I can't even practice the truth in such a small matter; I can't even speak one truthful statement or admit to a mistake. I have been deeply corrupted by Satan! God, I am very discouraged. I don't want to live like this; please save me."

Monday, December 12, 2022, Cloudy, Turning Clear

I originally wanted to admit my mistake to the leader, but when it came time to speak, I still felt quite apprehensive. I couldn't help but wonder: Why is it so hard for me to admit my mistake and tell the truth? What is really preventing me from being honest? I shared my state with Sister Li Tong, and she sent me a passage of God's words, which finally gave me some understanding about the matter. Almighty God says: **"If you have the will when doing something, you can do it well in a single push; but a single instance of telling the truth without a lie does not make you an honest person once and for all. Being an honest person involves changing your disposition, and this requires ten or twenty years of experience. You must cast off your deceitful disposition of lies and duplicity before you can meet the basic standard of being an honest person. Is this not difficult for everyone? It is an enormous challenge. God now wants to perfect and gain a group of people, and all who pursue the truth must accept judgment and chastisement, trials and**

refinement, the purpose of which is to resolve their deceitful dispositions and make them into honest people, people who submit to God. This is not something that can be achieved in a single push; it calls for true faith, and one must suffer many trials and much refinement before they can achieve it. If God asked you now to be an honest person and speak the truth, something that involves the facts, and your future and your fate, the consequences of which might not be to your advantage, with others no longer thinking highly of you, and feeling yourself that your reputation was destroyed—in such circumstances, could you be frank, and speak the truth? Could you still be honest? This is the hardest thing to do, much harder than giving up your life. You might say, ‘Having me tell the truth won’t do. I’d rather die for God than tell the truth. I don’t want to be an honest person at all. I’d rather die than have everyone look down on me and think I am an ordinary person.’ What does this show people cherish most? What people cherish most is their status and reputation—things that are controlled by their satanic dispositions. Life is secondary. If the situation forced them to, they would summon the strength to give their life, but status and reputation are not easy to give up. For people who believe in God, giving their life is not of the utmost importance; God requires people to accept the truth, and truly be honest people who say whatever is in their hearts, opening up and laying themselves bare to everyone. Is this easy to do? (No, it isn’t.) God does not, in fact, ask you to give up your life. Was your life not given to you by God? What use would your life be to God? God does not want it. He wants you to speak honestly, to say who you are and what you think in your heart. Can you say these things? Here, the task becomes difficult, and you may say, ‘Have me work hard, and I’d have the strength to do it. Have me

sacrifice all of my property, and I could do it. I could easily abandon my parents and children, my marriage and career. But saying what is in my heart, speaking honestly—that’s the one thing I cannot do.’ What is the reason you cannot do it? It is that once you do, anyone who knows you or is familiar with you will see you differently. They will no longer look up to you. You will have lost face and been utterly humiliated, and your integrity and dignity will be no more. Your lofty status and prestige in the hearts of others will be no more. This is why in such circumstances, no matter what, you will not speak the truth. When people encounter this, there is a battle in their hearts, and when that battle is over, some ultimately break through their difficulties while others do not, and remain controlled by their corrupt satanic dispositions and their own status, reputation, and so-called dignity. This is a difficulty, is it not? Merely speaking honestly and telling the truth is not some great feat, yet so many brave heroes, so many people who have sworn to dedicate themselves, expend themselves, and spend their lives for God, and so many who have said grandiose things to God find it impossible to do” (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. The Proper Fulfillment of Duty Requires Harmonious Cooperation). After reading God’s words, I realized that I dare not admit my mistake to the leader because I value my pride and status too much, and I am overly concerned with my image in the eyes of others. Thinking back, ever since I was little I have regarded Satan’s poisons such as “People need their pride just as a tree needs its bark” and “A man leaves his name behind wherever he stays, just as a goose utters its cry wherever it flies” as wise sayings. I have always placed great importance on my pride and status. Whatever I do, I want to leave a good impression on others and receive their praise. When I do poorly and lose face, I feel very distressed. I remember when I was in school, the teacher

would ask students who made mistakes to raise their hands. When I made mistakes frequently, I felt that the teacher and my classmates would think I was stupid and laugh at me, so I didn't dare to raise my hand. When the teacher passed by me, I would cover my mistakes to prevent the teacher from seeing them. To preserve my pride, I learned to resort to tricks and be deceptive at a young age. After believing in God, I worked on video production in the church. I knew that this job required great attention to details, as any small mistake could lead to great losses. Therefore, I tried to be as meticulous as possible, wanting the brothers and sisters to think that I was diligent and responsible, and to have a good impression on me. I also hoped the leader would value me. Especially having just recently become in charge of video work, I thought it must be because everyone approves of me, and sees me as a serious, responsible, and trustworthy person. So when I made mistakes, my first concern was my pride and status. I worried that if the leader knew I made such a basic mistake, she would definitely no longer trust or value me, and the brothers and sisters would look down on me, thinking I was irresponsible and scummy, which would destroy the good image I had sculpted over the years. To protect my pride and maintain my good image in everyone's eyes, I engaged in deceit and fraudulence, and tried to cover up my mistake. I even thought about brushing the issue aside, not mentioning it to anyone, hoping to downplay it and get away with it. I was so deceitful! I knew very well that God scrutinizes everything, yet I still tried to cover up my mistake, showing that I am not only deceitful but also very intransigent. I realized that my pride and status are the biggest obstacles to being an honest person. If I can't break free from the bondage and constraint of my pride and status, I will not be able to practice the truth, and in the end, I will be eliminated.

I also read God's words saying: **"Many practical problems arise as people experience being honest. Sometimes they speak without thinking, they slip up momentarily and tell a lie because they are governed by a wrong motive or aim, or vanity and pride, and as a result, they have to keep telling more and more lies to cover it up. In the end, they do not feel at ease in their hearts, but they can't take those lies back, they lack the courage to correct their mistakes, to admit that they told lies, and in this way, their mistakes go on and on. After this, it is always like there is a rock pressing on their hearts; they always want to find an opportunity to come clean, to admit their mistake and repent, but they never put this into practice. Ultimately, they think it over and say to themselves, 'I'll make up for it when I perform my duty in the future.' They always say they'll make up for it, but they never do. It is not as simple as just apologizing after telling a lie—can you make up for the harm and consequences of telling lies and engaging in deception? If, amidst great self-hatred, you are able to practice repentance, and never do that kind of thing again, then you might receive God's tolerance and mercy. If you speak honeyed words and say that you'll make up for your lies in the future, but do not truly repent, and later continue to lie and deceive, then you are extremely stubborn in your refusal to repent, and you are sure to be eliminated. ... That deceiving people is a revelation of a corrupt disposition, it is to rebel against and resist God, and so it will bring you pain. When you lie and deceive, you may feel that you have spoken very cleverly and tactfully, and that you haven't given any small clues of your deception away—but later, you will feel a sense of reproach and accusation, which may follow you around your whole life. If you intentionally and deliberately lie and deceive, and a day comes when you realize the**

gravity of this, it will pierce you through your heart like a knife, and you will always be looking for a chance to make amends. And that is what you ought to do, unless you have no conscience, and have never lived by your conscience, and have no humanity, and no character or dignity. If you have a little character and dignity, and some awareness of conscience, when you realize that you are lying and engaging in deception, you will feel this behavior of yours to be shameful, to be disgraceful and low; you will despise and detest yourself, and you will abandon the path of lies and deception” (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. Only an Honest Person Can Live Out True Human Likeness). After reading God’s words, I was deeply moved. In the past few days, I haven’t told anyone about my mistake in doing my duties. While my pride hasn’t suffered any damage, I feel a constant prick in my heart whenever I am idle. This makes me restless and uneasy each day; I can’t sleep well at night, and my heart suffers from guilt. I deeply feel that without being an honest person, there is no peace or joy. By relying on deception and pretense, I temporarily saved my pride, but I lost my dignity and integrity, and the pain from the guilt is overwhelming. Looking back, I realize that I made the same mistakes several times because I didn’t check previous records before making videos. If I had followed the work procedures and checked everything properly, these mistakes could have been entirely avoided. Although the leader emphasized the importance of filling out and checking forms after my first two mistakes, I found the process too troublesome and decided to roll the dice, thinking that not checking probably wouldn’t cause any problems. Sometimes, when I was busy, I skipped this step. I see that in doing my duties, I was not only perfunctory but also arrogant and self-righteous, and far too scummy. When mistakes occurred, I even tried to cover them up; I disguised and packaged myself and deceived others with a

false image. This is truly despicable and shameless! Realizing the severity of this issue, I prayed to God and repented.

I also read another passage of God's words and found the path to practice. Almighty God says: **"Only honest people can have a share in the kingdom of heaven. If you do not try to be an honest person, and if you don't experience and practice in the direction of pursuing the truth, if you don't expose your own ugliness, and if you don't lay yourself bare, then you will never be able to receive the Holy Spirit's work and gain God's approval. No matter what you do or what duty you perform, you must have an honest attitude. Without an honest attitude, you cannot perform your duty well. If you always perform your duty in a perfunctory way, and you fail to do something well, then you should reflect on yourself, know yourself, and open up to dissect yourself. Then you should seek the truth principles and strive to do better next time, instead of being perfunctory"** (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. The Most Fundamental Practice of Being an Honest Person). After reading God's words, my heart suddenly became clear. When mistakes occur in doing duties, I should reflect on myself, summarize the deviations, and open up, lay bare, and dissect myself before everyone, accepting their supervision. This can help prevent future mistakes and is also a practice of being an honest person. My role as a supervisor is an opportunity given by God for me to practice. Moreover, God's house has never demanded that people make no mistakes at all in doing their duties, much less will it classify people for making mistakes. The key is whether after making a mistake, a person can promptly summarize the reasons, reflect on themselves, seek the truth principles, and avoid repeating the same mistakes. As long as one's performance of duty is not consistently perfunctory and irreformable, God's house will treat them correctly and

give them opportunities. Being driven by corrupt dispositions, my perfunctoriness in doing my duties led to mistakes, causing losses to the church's interests. This is a fact. I should be an honest person, lay bare and dissect myself, focus on seeking the truth to resolve my corrupt dispositions, and diligently do my duties. This is the attitude of accepting the truth. If I conceal and deceive when I make mistakes, and cover up my errors with a false image while being obviously full of perfunctoriness in doing my duties in order to delude others, although I may temporarily preserve my pride and status, the problem of being perfunctory will remain unresolved, and I won't be able to fulfill my duties to standard. This is actually harming myself. I can no longer package myself to protect my pride; I must practice the truth and be an honest person. I thought about other brothers and sisters who also had issues with repetitive production. As a supervisor, I should set an example by bringing my own problems to light, summarizing them with everyone, seeking a path, and preventing everyone from making the same mistakes that could harm the work. Thinking of this gave me the motivation to practice the truth and the courage to admit my mistake.

Wednesday, December 14, 2022, Sunny

During the gathering, I openly shared my state with everyone, exposing my corruption and mistake, and reminded everyone to learn from these lessons. After the gathering, I felt like a heavy burden was finally lifted off my chest. My heart felt relieved and I experienced the sweetness and ease that come from being open and speaking the truth. Contrary to my expectations, the leader did not look down on me but instead fellowshiped God's words to help me, which was very edifying. I made up my mind to focus on solving the problem of being perfunctory in doing my duties, so that my duties can achieve good results.

Through this experience, I realized that being an honest person is not as simple as I had imagined. It is not about having a straightforward personality and speaking bluntly. This was my distorted understanding. I am deeply corrupted by Satan, filled with corrupt dispositions like deceitfulness, arrogance, and selfishness. To protect my pride and status, I can lie and deceive. I need to accept the judgment, chastisement, and pruning of God's words, to undergo transformation. I remembered a passage of God's words I had read before: **"In God's eyes, being able to be an honest person involves more than just a change in conduct and behavior; it also involves essential changes in one's mentality and views on matters. They no longer have an intention to lie or deceive, and there's absolutely no falsehood or deception in what they say and do. Their words and deeds become more and more truthful, with more and more honest words. For instance, when asked if you have done something, even if admitting it would lead to getting slapped or being punished, you are still able to tell the truth. Even if admitting it entails bearing significant responsibility, facing death or destruction, you are able to tell the truth and are willing to practice the truth to satisfy God. This indicates that your attitude toward God's words has become quite firm. No matter when, choosing any one of the standards of practice required by God has become hardly an issue for you; you can naturally attain and put it into practice without the restraints of external circumstances, the guidance of leaders and workers, or the sense of God's scrutiny beside you. You are able to do these things quite effortlessly on your own. Without the restraints of external circumstances, and not out of fear of God's discipline, nor fear of the reproach of your conscience, and certainly not out of fear of others' ridicule or supervision—not because of any of these—you can**

proactively examine your own behavior, measure its correctness, and evaluate whether it complies with the truth and satisfies God. At that point, you have basically met the standard of being an honest person in God's eyes" (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. Only by Resolving One's Notions Can One Embark on the Right Track of Belief in God (3)). Comparing myself to the standard of an honest person required by God, I know I still fall far short. However, I am willing to strive to meet God's requirements, practice God's words in every situation that arises, focus on speaking truthfully, and practice the truth to be an honest person.

3. Staying True to My Duty Through Adversity

By Wang Ju, China

In 2016, I was doing a duty of a watering deacon in the church. At the time, the church leader was being suppressed and tormented by an antichrist and was living in negativity. She lost the Holy Spirit's work and was dismissed. My upper level leader gave me instructions, saying that the antichrist in the church hadn't been fully revealed and the brothers and sisters still lacked discernment, so she was hoping I could work with Sister Yang Yue and take up the church work. Later on, since my health wasn't that great and I didn't have the strength or energy, the church was going to change my duty. But before the transfer was carried out, something happened in the church. Back then, the upper leader scheduled me for a meeting with a few other sisters. As always, I arrived at the host's house at the right time, but to my surprise, I waited for ages and no one came. So I went to Yang Yue's house to look for her. I kept knocking but there was no response. I felt a little uneasy, afraid she'd been arrested. Unexpectedly, two days later, Chen Hui told me that Yang Yue and two upper leaders had been arrested by the police that day, and the police had turned her entire house upside down. Hearing this terrible news, I knew we were facing a trial and refinement from God, but I still felt really nervous. I thought of how I'd gone to Yang Yue's home that day and knocked on her door, luckily though, I had God's protection and didn't run into the police, or I'd not have escaped their clutches. What a close call!

Later, I heard people talking about that arrest around town, which is how I found out it was a nationwide operation. In our city, lots of armed police officers were mobilized and they were doing citywide sweeps, madly arresting God's chosen people. There were banners in every street and alley,

and all sorts of negative propaganda were up on walls. There was a feeling of panic throughout the whole city. I thought of how lots of brothers and sisters with duties had been arrested, and that all implicated households could be raided and church belongings could be seized by the great red dragon at any time, so the church belongings should be transferred to somewhere safe, but the police were still searching and surveilling. What could be done? I was feeling frantic. When I got home, my daughter pointed at her phone and said, “Mom, be careful and don’t go out for a couple of days. One of my public security clients sent me a video saying they’ve already arrested over 70 believers, and they’re still searching.” Hearing this made me even more afraid, and it really put me on edge, too. I was thinking about how Yang Yue and I had always worked together. I went to her house a lot, too, and now that she was arrested, would the police find me through surveillance? If they’d already found out about me, wouldn’t I be walking into the barrel of a gun if I went back out to do my duty? I already had an occupational disease from my work, and was really frail. If I really were arrested, how many beatings could I take? If the police tried to torture a confession out of me and beat me to death, wouldn’t I lose my chance at salvation? My mind kept going back to the scenes of brothers and sisters being tortured in the videos that I watched before, and I got more uneasy as I thought about it. I went into a cold sweat, paralyzed and devoid of strength all over, unable to calm down. I thought I should run from the danger right away, hide out, and go from there. But then I thought of how much aftermath work needed to be done in the church in the wake of the arrests, and that since Yang Yue was arrested, I had to take up the church’s work. I needed to tell those brothers and sisters in danger to hide, and I had to move books of God’s words right away. It was a huge responsibility. If I didn’t do this work well, it would harm the work of God’s house even more.

I could get by if my own property were lost, but if books of God's words were taken, that would cause losses to the lives of God's chosen people in a way money can't measure. If I hid at such a critical time, could I still be called a believer? I would be really lacking humanity. Where would my sense of responsibility be? But I couldn't do these jobs well on my own. It was possible the police already had me under surveillance. If I really were arrested, wouldn't there be even fewer people to take up church work? Then it suddenly occurred to me that two sisters, Chen Hui and Zhang Min, were diligent in pursuing the truth and could shoulder responsibility, and that I should have them handle the aftermath, and I could work behind the scenes. They knew I wasn't in good health, so they would probably be understanding. This way the church's work wouldn't be held up, and I'd stay out of danger. Then, something the upper leader told me kept popping into my mind. She'd told me to take on the church's work with Yang Yue. I knew Yang Yue had been arrested, so I should shoulder that responsibility, but I was afraid of the danger. I wanted to flee and hide in this time of crisis to protect myself. I even wanted to push that danger and hardship onto other sisters. I was being so selfish. I was abandoning my duty, which is doing evil! I suddenly thought of a passage of God's words: **"How you regard God's commissions is extremely important, and this is a very serious matter. If you cannot complete what God has entrusted to people, then you are not fit to live in His presence and you should be punished"** (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. How to Know Man's Nature). God's words were an immediate wake-up call. I felt guilty and regretful for thinking that way. How could I offload my commission for the church on others? I'd accepted so much sustenance from God's truths, so I should've been reflecting on how to do my duty well to repay God. While the church was in danger, I should protect brothers and sisters and safeguard the

interests of God's house. I was the supervisor, but I wanted to cower and hide at this critical time and foist the risk onto others. If the books of God's words and the property of God's house were looted by the great red dragon because of my selfishness and self-protection, that would be an irretrievable transgression! Even if I were safe for a while, in God's eyes, I would be a coward leading a shameful existence, a traitor who runs from battle. Would I then be worthy of living before God? If I abandoned my duty, wouldn't that be betraying God? Then what meaning would I have in living? I felt upset and guilty at this thought. I felt so indebted to God, and I hated myself for being so despicable and shameless. I'd always been living for myself, but for once, I needed to practice the truth and live for God. I knew that no matter what I encountered, praying and relying on God was the greatest wisdom. So I prayed to God, "Oh God! I don't know if the police already have their eyes on me. I'm feeling weak and afraid, but whether I'm arrested or not is in Your hands. I don't want to live an ignoble existence or betray my conscience and rebel against You. There's a lot of aftermath work that needs to be handled for the church in time. I must carry out my responsibilities. God, please protect my heart and give me the resolve to suffer hardship. If I really am arrested and beaten to death, it will be what You allowed. I'm willing to submit to Your orchestration and arrangements, and I'll never sell out the interests of God's house." After praying, I read some of God's words. God says: **"You should not be afraid of this and that; no matter how many difficulties and dangers you might face, you are capable of remaining steady before Me, unobstructed by any hindrance, so that My will may be carried out unimpeded. This is your duty.... You must endure all; for Me, you must be ready to relinquish everything you possess and do everything you can to follow Me, and be ready to expend your all. Now is the time that I shall test you: Will you**

offer your loyalty to Me? Can you loyally follow Me to the end of the road? Be not afraid; with My support, who could ever block this road? Remember this! Do not forget! All that occurs is by My goodwill, and everything is under My observation. Can you follow My word in all that you say and do? When the trials of fire come upon you, will you kneel down and call out? Or will you cower, incapable of moving forward?” (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. Utterances of Christ in the Beginning, Chapter 10). When I saw that God said, **“Remember this! Do not forget!”** I was really moved. It was just like parents telling their child, “Don’t be afraid, I’m here.” I suddenly had faith and strength, and felt I had support. I could feel that God didn’t want me to always live in constant anxiety and fear. I shouldn’t fear not doing my duty well, or fear being arrested by the great red dragon, and I particularly shouldn’t forget that God is always with us. No matter how cunning and evil the great red dragon is, they can’t stop what God wants to accomplish. Even if the police had their eyes on believers every single day, they couldn’t ruin the church’s work, because everything is under the sovereignty and orchestration of God. I should have faith, give myself over to God, and finish the aftermath work well as soon as possible. This awful situation was God testing my faith and inspecting my true stature to see if I could risk my life to fulfill my duty loyally, protect the brothers and sisters, and safeguard the church’s work. At that thought, there was only one thing on my mind: No matter what, I had to think of a way to overcome the difficulties in front of me, minimize our losses, and do my duty well, otherwise I wouldn’t find peace. When I was ready to submit and go through that situation, to my surprise, Chen Hui and Zhang Min showed up unexpectedly together at my host’s home to discuss handling the aftermath. Seeing them, I truly felt both happy and ashamed. Considering how I’d wanted to saddle them with danger, I felt how

despicable and selfish I'd been. My thinking was vile and shameful. Even though I hadn't informed them, at the critical time, they rushed over without any hesitation to prevent any harm to the interests of God's house. I was so moved and was thanking God nonstop. I could see that God was ruling and orchestrating everything, and He hadn't saddled me with a burden too hard to bear. We then had a quick discussion, divided up the responsibilities, and set out right away. First, I went to a nearby house on my own where Yang Yue had attended gatherings, to let the host know she had to be alert. I was praying the whole way over, holding my umbrella really low. I got there pretty fast and informed the host sister. At the second home, Chen Hui and I had to move some books of God's words together. It was far away, and there was surveillance all along the route. I could see police cars driving around in the distance. I felt a bit afraid again and thought, "The police are tightening up their searches. If I pass through surveillance and get recognized, I'll be in trouble. Then the books of God's words will be taken and Chen Hui will be implicated." I was sitting in the back of Chen Hui's electric scooter, clutching her clothing, my palms sweating. Before we got to the house my heart was pounding, and I worried there were police lying in wait nearby. I kept calling out to God in my heart, and then I thought of something God said: **"Faith is like a single log bridge: Those who cling abjectly to life will have difficulty in crossing it, but those who are ready to sacrifice themselves can pass over, sure of foot and worry-free"**

(The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. Utterances of Christ in the Beginning, Chapter 6). God's words gave me the courage to face this hostile environment. I told myself, "Even if I have to put my life on the line, I must protect the books of God's words. I must have faith and believe God rules over everything. No matter how crazy the great red dragon is, without God's permission, they can't do anything to us." Thinking this way, I didn't feel so timid and

afraid anymore. With one heart and one mind, Chen Hui and I prayed to God, and in the end, we moved the books to a safe location without problems. A great weight was finally lifted from my heart.

Later, I got a letter from an upper leader, saying things were dicey, and that various items of church work were at a standstill. She wanted me, Chen Hui, and Zhang Min to stay in charge of things. It occurred to me that the antichrist and evil people hadn't been cleared out, and were still disrupting things, and that I should take up that responsibility and cleanse away those people so the brothers and sisters could resume a normal church life soon. But there was no improvement at all in the situation. Every few days there was terrible news of brothers and sisters being arrested and their homes raided. I was later informed that the great red dragon was using all sorts of vile tactics to tempt and mislead the arrested and bait them so they would sell each other out, using torture to squeeze them if they didn't do so. Later there was news that Zhu Feng, a false leader who had been dismissed from our church, couldn't bear the great red dragon's misleading and interrogation using both soft and hard tactics, and within a few days she became a Judas and betrayed God. Hearing all of this news put me on edge once again. I kept thinking about it and couldn't sleep that night. I felt like I could see the agonized faces of brothers and sisters in torture chairs. I also thought of how Zhu Feng knew everything about the church's work and where I lived. If she could even betray God, who knew when she might sell me out. If I were arrested, could I withstand the cruel torture? Wouldn't it be awful if I died in jail? While thinking these thoughts, I found myself plunged into darkness. I didn't feel a burden for the duty I should do and I was totally sapped of strength. On my way to gatherings, I was really nervous when a police car went by. When passing the area where some brothers and sisters were arrested, I was on edge and afraid of being

arrested. I was thinking that I could hide out for a little while, wait until things were better and then have gatherings with the others. But I felt unsettled at that thought. I thought of how if the antichrist and evil people were not dealt with in the church, they would keep disrupting things, and if I kept living in a state of cowardice and fearing death, not doing my duty well, I wouldn't have good deeds or any testimony, and would become Satan's laughingstock. I pondered, "Everyone experiences birth, aging, illness, and death. Why was I so afraid when faced with death?" Mainly, I was too self-protective. I was afraid I wouldn't have a good ending in spite of my faith, and instead, I'd be tortured and beaten to death by the great red dragon, enduring horrible pain. I'd only been a believer for a few years and didn't understand the truth yet. If I died like that, I'd lose my chance to eat and drink God's words, experience His work, and be saved. Then wouldn't my faith be in vain? The more I thought about it, the harder it was to accept, so I prayed to God right away, asking Him to enlighten and guide me so I could understand the truth, and gain a proper understanding toward these things. Later, I came across this passage of God's words: **"God has a plan for every one of His followers. Each one of them has an environment, furnished for man by God, in which to perform their duty, and they have the grace and favor of God that is man's to enjoy. They also have special circumstances, which God lays out for man, and there is much suffering they must undergo—it is nothing like the smooth sailing that man imagines. ... how did those disciples of the Lord Jesus die? Among the disciples, there were those who were stoned, dragged behind a horse, crucified upside down, dismembered by five horses—every sort of death befell them. What was the reason for their deaths? Were they lawfully executed for their crimes? No. They were condemned, beaten, scolded, and put to death because they spread the Lord's gospel and**

were rejected by the people of the world—that is how they were martyred. Let us not speak of the final outcome of those martyrs, or of God’s definition of their conduct, but ask this: When they arrived at the end, did the ways that they met the end of their lives accord with human notions? (No, it did not.) From the perspective of human notions, they paid such a great price to spread the work of God, but were ultimately killed by Satan. This does not accord with human notions, but this is precisely what happened to them. It is what God allowed. What truth can be sought in this? Was God allowing them to die this way His curse and condemnation, or was it His plan and blessing? It was neither. What was it? People now reflect on their deaths with much heartache, but that was how things were. Those who believed in God died that way, how is this to be explained? When we mention this topic, you put yourselves in their position, so are your hearts sad, and do you feel a hidden pain? You think, ‘These people did their duty to spread God’s gospel and should be considered good people, so how could they come to such an end and such an outcome?’ Actually, this was how their bodies died and passed away; this was their means of departure from the human world, yet that did not mean their outcome was the same. No matter what the means of their death and departure was nor how it happened, it was not how God defined the final outcomes of those lives, of those created beings. This is something you must see clearly. On the contrary, they used precisely those means to condemn this world and to testify to God’s deeds. These created beings used their most precious lives—they used the last moment of their lives to testify to God’s deeds, to testify to God’s great power, and to declare to Satan and the world that God’s deeds are right, that the Lord Jesus is God, that He is the Lord, and God’s

incarnate flesh. Even down to the final moment of their lives, they never denied the name of the Lord Jesus. Was this not a form of judgment upon this world? They used their lives to proclaim to the world, to confirm to human beings that the Lord Jesus is the Lord, that the Lord Jesus is Christ, that He is God's incarnate flesh, that the work of redemption He did for all humanity allows humanity to live on—this fact is forever unchanging. Those who were martyred for spreading the gospel of the Lord Jesus, to what extent did they perform their duty? Was it to the ultimate extent? How was the ultimate extent manifested? (They offered their lives.) That's right, they paid the price with their lives. Family, wealth, and the material things of this life are all external things; the only thing that is related to the self is life. To every living person, life is the thing most worthy of being treasured, the most precious thing and, as it happens, these people were able to offer their most precious possession—life—as confirmation of and testimony to God's love for mankind. Until the day they died, they did not deny God's name, nor did they deny God's work, and they used their last moments of life to testify to the existence of this fact—is this not the highest form of testimony? This is the best way of doing one's duty; this is what it is to fulfill one's responsibility. When Satan threatened and terrorized them, and, in the end, even when it made them pay the price of their lives, they did not abandon their responsibility. This is what it is to fulfill one's duty to the utmost extent. What do I mean by this? Do I mean to have you use the same method to testify of God and to spread His gospel? You do not necessarily need to do so, but you must understand that this is your responsibility, that if God needs you to, you should accept it as something you are honor-bound to do” (The Word,

Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. Spreading the Gospel Is the Duty to Which All

Believers Are Honor-Bound). God's words helped me see the issue of death more clearly. I learned what mindset to have in life-or-death situations, and that I'd always been constrained and bound by my fear of death mainly because I didn't entirely understand the truth that God rules our fates. Even though I'd read lots of God's words as a believer and in theory I understood that God rules and arranges our lives and deaths, I didn't have any real personal experience or understanding. I also saw my fatal flaw. I was mainly afraid of death because I was afraid of being tortured and physically suffering before dying, and I was afraid I wouldn't have a good ending and destination if I died. I felt like letting the great red dragon torture me to death would be a tragic death. Especially when I thought of how so many brothers and sisters were arrested and tortured, and heard about how Zhu Feng betrayed God, I was afraid of being sold out by her. I was worried that I too might suffer that sort of devastating torture, or even die from it, so I felt really upset. But actually, physical suffering isn't the worst pain. If we can't handle torture and betray God, our spirits, souls, and bodies will be punished. That's the greatest suffering and unbearable pain. I thought of those who were Judases and betrayed God, and who were then forsaken by the Holy Spirit. They said it was as bad as if their hearts were being ripped out, and they didn't know how they'd go on living, as though they were soulless corpses, nothing more than zombies. Living that way would be much more painful than being tortured to death. Then I thought of Peter. After he escaped from prison, the Lord Jesus appeared to him and said: **"Would you have Me crucified for you once more?"** (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. People Make Too Many Demands of God). Peter understood what God meant, and he knew that the day God had prepared for him to give testimony had come. He submitted, ready to submit until his death, and give all of himself and be crucified for God. Peter knew that

being crucified meant bearing excruciating pain, but he still chose to submit to God, to bear beautiful, resounding testimony for God and to shame Satan. In light of Peter's submission to God, I felt so ashamed. The thought of death filled me with fear and I had demands of God, hoping I wouldn't die in pain and I'd have a beautiful destination. How was that being reasonable or submissive? But then I realized that when harmed by Satan and facing death, only being able to sacrifice our own life is truly meaningful, and the best testimony. If I chose to protect myself and live without dignity, even though my body may live on and not suffer pain, to God, this was betraying Him and failing to bear witness. In God's eyes, my soul was already dead and I'd be punished by Him in the end. Only that is truly dying. If I could sacrifice my life, protect the church's work, do my duty well, stand firm in my witness for God, and shame Satan, even if I were beaten to death, my soul would still be in God's hands and continue to live. At that point I realized I was too rebellious, and I wasn't willing to submit to God's sovereignty and orchestrations, and I wasn't committed to sacrificing my life to bear witness to God. God allowed me to experience this hardship and oppression, hoping I'd learn and equip myself with the truth, and come to know that created beings should submit to God, and that if someday God needed me to give that kind of testimony, I needed to submit unconditionally, be like Peter and be resolved to satisfy God. Though I still didn't have much understanding of God, I believed that everything God does is righteous. Whether He has someone live or die, it contains His goodwill and His sovereignty and arrangements. Once I understood these things, I wasn't so constrained by the thought of death anymore. No matter how crazy the great red dragon's persecution was and whether I was arrested, I was ready to put myself in God's hands and fulfill my duty.

I then went to the meeting places to fellowship God's words with brothers and sisters, so everyone understood that God was using the great red dragon to serve His goals, to perfect us, using its arrests and persecution so we could clearly see its evil essence, have discernment over it, and reject it from our hearts, while also perfecting our faith and love through these trials. While the great red dragon was in a frenzy of arresting us, the antichrist was also bringing mayhem and disruption to the church. But we all need to rely on God, still persist in eating and drinking His words and discern the antichrist in that environment, to fulfill our duty and stand firm in my witness for God. Once they understood God's intention, they were all ready to continue to have church life in this harsh environment, and fulfill their duty well to shame Satan.

I reflected on myself after that, too. Why had I been so lacking in faith in the previous situation, always thinking selfishly of myself? What was the real reason? In my seeking, I read this in God's words: **"Antichrists are extremely selfish and despicable. They do not have true faith in God, much less loyalty to God; when they encounter an issue, they only protect and safeguard themselves. For them, nothing is more important than their own safety. As long as they can live and won't get arrested, they don't care how much harm is done to the work of the church. These people are extremely selfish, they don't think of the brothers and sisters at all, or of the work of the church, they only think of their own safety. They are antichrists. So when such things befall those who are loyal to God and have true faith in God, how do they handle them? How does what they do differ from what antichrists do? (When such things befall those who are loyal to God, they will think of any way to safeguard the interests of the house of God, to protect against losses to the offerings of God, and they will make the necessary arrangements for the**

leaders and workers, and the brothers and sisters, to minimize losses. Antichrists, meanwhile, make sure they are protected first. They are not concerned about the work of the church or the safety of God's chosen people, and when the church is faced with arrests, it results in a loss to church work.) **Antichrists abandon the work of the church and God's offerings, and they do not arrange for people to handle the aftermath. This is the same as permitting the great red dragon to seize God's offerings and His chosen people. Is this not a covert betrayal of God's offerings and His chosen people? When those who are loyal to God know clearly that an environment is dangerous, they still brave the risk of doing the work of handling the aftermath, and they keep the losses to God's house to a minimum before they themselves withdraw. They do not give priority to their own safety. Tell Me, in this wicked country of the great red dragon, who could ensure that there is no danger at all in believing in God and doing a duty? Whatever duty one takes on, it entails some risk—yet the performance of duty is commissioned by God, and while following God, one must take on the risk of doing their duty. One should exercise wisdom, and one has need of taking measures to ensure their safety, but one should not put their personal safety first. They should consider God's intentions, putting the work of His house first and putting the spread of the gospel first. Completing God's commission of them is what matters most, and it comes first. Antichrists give top priority to their personal safety; they believe that nothing else has anything to do with them. They do not care when something happens to someone else, regardless of who it might be. As long as nothing bad happens to the antichrists themselves, they feel at ease. They are devoid of any loyalty, which is determined by the antichrists' nature essence"** (The Word, Vol. 4. Exposing Antichrists. Item Nine (Part

Two)). God's words stabbed straight to my heart. God reveals that antichrists are incredibly evil, selfish, and despicable by nature and that they're not loyal to God. Facing danger, they just choose to protect themselves, regardless of the safety of the brothers and sisters. They only consider their fleshly interests and their own safety, allowing God's chosen people and God's offerings to be seized by the great red dragon. In this, they are covertly selling out brothers and sisters, and the interests of God's house. That's how antichrists act. At first, I had selfish and despicable thoughts and ideas which actually revealed my antichrist disposition. When Yang Yue was arrested, lots of others needed to be informed and I needed to take responsibility for moving the books of God's words quickly, but I was afraid of being arrested by the great red dragon, and of being tortured and beaten to death, and then losing my chance at salvation, and so I wanted to abandon my duty. As a leader, I was responsible for church work. It was my responsibility to protect the safety of brothers and sisters and to make sure the church's interests weren't compromised. But when there was danger, I didn't think of others at all, only of my own life or death. Anything about the brothers and sisters and the church's interests was just an afterthought at that moment, as if I had no empathy for them if they were arrested, beaten, or in pain. I felt that losses to the interests of God's house had nothing to do with me and it was enough just to keep myself safe. How could I be so lacking in humanity, despicable, and malicious? Those loyal to God put the interests of God's house first in all things. But when something happened, I just wanted to abandon my duty and hide behind the scenes. I was hoping I wouldn't have to do anything dangerous or face anything life-threatening. Time after time, I wanted to push the dangerous work off onto Chen Hui and Zhang Min. Even though I didn't really do those things, my thoughts and ideas were coming to the fore really strongly. This disposition of mine

was just as evil and despicable as the antichrists'. In fact, I was already on the verge of committing evil. Luckily, God's words judged, exposed, and guided me in time, so I narrowly avoided doing evil. Otherwise, God would have despised me and spurned me. Realizing this, I finally fully understood how important it is to experience the judgment and chastisement of God's words in believing in God.

In the days that followed, the great red dragon was relentless in its arrests and persecution of church members. A sister who'd been transferred from somewhere else was arrested while doing her duty, and a person who'd already been cleared out was also arrested. The environment was still very tense. I read this in God's words later on: **"Do you truly hate the great red dragon? Do you truly, sincerely hate it? Why have I asked you so many times? Why do I keep asking you this question, again and again? What image is there of the great red dragon in your hearts? Has it really been removed? Do you truly not consider it to be your father? All people should perceive My intention in My questions. It is not to provoke the anger of the people, nor to incite rebellion among man, nor that man may find his own way out, but is to allow all people to liberate themselves from the bondage of the great red dragon"** (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. God's Words to the Entire Universe, Chapter 28). God's words are right. The great red dragon's country is like hell on earth. Before I had personally experienced its pursuit and persecution, when I read God's words, **"Do you truly hate the great red dragon?"** though I acknowledged it verbally, I didn't really hate it in my heart. It wasn't until I'd seen the CCP's persecution of believers and its cruel methods of abusing people with my own eyes, and how it arrests believers without rhyme or reason, cruelly torturing them and even beating some of them to death, that I finally began to hate the great red dragon, the demon from the very bottom of my heart. It

was through the great red dragon's persecution and abuse that I truly saw Satan's vicious, evil essence. I also personally experienced God's sovereignty and authority, and gained faith in God. No matter what kind of situations I faced afterward, I was willing to do my best to fulfill my duty, and not be a selfish and despicable, self-serving person anymore. Instead, I'd lean on God, consider His intention, put the interests of God's house first, and do my duty well.

After that, I fellowshiped with my partnered sisters that no matter how terrible the situation, exposing the antichrists and evil people couldn't be delayed. We got everything done according to principles after our fellowship. Through the guidance of God's words, I wasn't as scared of being arrested anymore, and I could do my duty normally. In the end, we expelled the antichrist from the church without a problem, and brothers and sisters gradually got back to a normal church life. Everyone was grateful to God and praised Him. This time, faced with the great red dragon's arrest and persecution, I didn't give in, and I didn't abandon my duty. That was entirely a result of the guidance of God's words. Thanks be to God!

4. Don't Doubt Those You Employ: Is That Right?

By Lin Ping, China

In July 2020, I was elected as a leader, and took responsibility for the work of several churches. Sister Liu Jing had just been elected as a leader in one of those churches. I'd worked with her before, and knew her fairly well. She was mature, steady, looked at things from all angles, and had a burden in her duty. She'd always helped me with fellowship on God's words when I ran into problems or difficulties. I felt like she was pretty reliable, so I felt that I didn't have to worry as much about her church and could put more of my energy into the others. So, after briefing Liu Jing on how to handle various items of the work, I didn't concern myself much with her work. During this period, I saw she had a path in her work and was getting results in various items of her work, and this put my mind even more at ease. I figured that even if I wasn't checking up on things, she'd be able to quickly resolve any difficulties or problems she encountered. So for three straight months I didn't check or follow up in detail on the work she was responsible for, and even recommended her as a candidate for an election for a higher leadership position.

Then in December, I got a letter from my leader saying that some brothers and sisters had evaluated Liu Jing as not doing real work. She asked me to follow up and look into her work, and said that, for the time being, she wasn't a suitable candidate for the election. I was really taken aback to see this, "She's not doing real work? How could this be? If this is the case, how has her church been getting results in its work for the past few months? Sister Wu Xinming, her partner, has just recently trained as a leader, so she won't be too familiar with the work. Hasn't Liu Jing been shouldering all the work for that church? Are the leaders saying she doesn't

do real work just going by what those evaluations said without really getting a clear picture? I'd worked with Liu Jing before and knew her pretty well. Recently, some brothers and sisters were arrested in her church. She is busy dealing with the aftermath, and probably doesn't have time for other things. Even if it does seem she isn't doing real work, that is understandable. I cannot be wrong about her." I took a look at the evaluations from the brothers and sisters and found they'd written about ways Liu Jing hadn't done real work in her duty before. I was thinking, "What is with them? They're just seizing on Liu Jing's past transgressions instead of seeing whether she has changed. The work in the church that she's in charge of has been effective these past few months. She is able to do some real work." I explained the situation to the leader quickly and suggested letting her continue to run in the election.

A few days later, seeing I wasn't taking the matter of Liu Jing not doing actual work seriously and was still defending her, the leader reminded me, "We must look at things in accordance with God's words. Everyone has corrupt disposition; until we gain the truth and are perfected, no one is reliable—we will all do things our own way, and on the basis of our corrupt disposition. Without supervision, anyone can do things that resist God and harm the work of the church. So when it comes to church work, we can't have complete trust in anyone. Only by actually inquiring about and supervising the work can we discover and resolve problems in time. This is taking responsibility for the church's work." I said I'd do it, but I was thinking, "Supervision is warranted, but I shouldn't be suspicious of everything. Who doesn't want to pursue the truth and do a duty well? God's house isn't like the nonbelieving world. Brothers and sisters should trust each other, and not watch each other like hawks. I've told you that there is context to Liu Jing not doing some of her work, but you don't believe that.

I'll properly look into things to show you she's not that kind of person." So, I went to look into her work. I soon found out that her previous partner, Xinming, had mainly taken on most of their work. Since Xinming was recently reassigned, the results in various items of their church's work had started slipping. Also, I'd told Liu Jing to dismiss an unsuitable team leader surnamed Chen, and this still hadn't been done. She also couldn't work in harmony with the watering deacon and didn't pay any heed to the work of watering newcomers. Seeing what Liu Jing had done to the church's work, I felt quite guilty. The leader had reminded me to follow up and oversee her work, but I hadn't done so because I'd had too much trust in her. I'd figured that since she was in place, she should be given the right to work freely. I never thought it would turn out this way. I thought back on our interactions before—she doesn't seem to be the sort of person who's all talk, but doesn't do real work. Were there special circumstances holding her up? Just as I was puzzling over this, Liu Jing said, "Some brothers and sisters in our church were arrested recently. Dealing with the aftermath has been hectic and I haven't had time for everything." I breathed a sigh of relief when I heard this. It was just as I said—Liu Jing wasn't the sort of person who doesn't do real work. Managing all those post-arrest affairs had taken a lot of her time and energy. Some work hadn't been done well, but it was understandable. No one does a duty perfectly. So, I fellowshiped with her on the harms and consequences of not doing real work, and I told her to dismiss Chen right away. She agreed to this. But some time passed, and I heard that Chen still hadn't been dismissed. I went quickly to find out the situation of Liu Jing's duty. Her partner told me, "Every time you assign us work, Liu Jing fully agrees to it, but I don't see her implement any of it. I've just taken on a leadership role, so I'm not familiar with the specifics of the work, and she hasn't helped me. When facing problems or difficulties,

I've had to feel my way through by leaning on God." I was stunned to hear this from the sister. How could it be that Liu Jing hadn't done a single bit of real work? She hadn't been like that before. I'd gathered with her during this time—why hadn't I noticed her issues? I'd had too much trust in her, and hadn't been supervising or looking into her work. This led to an unfit team leader in the church staying in his position way too long, and no one had been overseeing the watering of newcomers. This had delayed the church's work and others' life entry. I'd truly done evil. When I saw Liu Jing after that, she said some brothers and sisters had pruned her during the last two days because she hadn't done real work. She felt really remorseful. She cried, saying she'd been irresponsible and had been muddling through her duty, and that she had no humanity. I figured she'd realized how serious her problems were, and she'd surely change after that, so I should give her another chance to repent, not dismiss her for now, and offer her more support going forward. Soon after, I pointed out her problems and told her to correct her deviations right away, as well as to dismiss that team leader that needed to be dismissed. She was full of promises, but though she did dismiss Chen later on, overall the work still didn't yield results. Later, others mentioned to me that they'd discovered some serious problems with Liu Jing. After some brothers and sisters were arrested, she hadn't protected church property right away, and hadn't cooperated proactively on various items of work, which meant nothing was accomplished in the work. What was most infuriating was that she hadn't promptly dealt with evil people being disruptive in the church, but had been busy with her personal affairs, throwing church work into chaos. I saw that Liu Jing wasn't doing any real work whatsoever and wasn't truly repentant at all. I felt so guilty. I'd never imagined things would turn out like that. I'd played a part in her evil and had committed transgressions before God. I also hated myself for being too

trusting, and for not following up on her work sooner. That had been so harmful to the church's work. I went to talk to Liu Jing right away and exposed each of her behaviors, and I dismissed her in the end.

Then the leader reproached me, "Why did you trust her so much? You entrusted her with such important work without supervising or inquiring about it. How could you be so assured?" She also read some of God's words for me: **"False leaders never inquire about supervisors who are not doing actual work, or who are not tending to their proper work. They think they just need to choose a supervisor and that's the end of the matter, and that afterward the supervisor can handle all work matters themselves. So false leaders just hold gatherings every so often, and do not supervise the work or ask how it's going, and act like hands-off bosses. If someone reports a problem with a supervisor, a false leader will say, 'It's just a minor problem, it's fine. You can handle it yourselves. Don't ask me.' The person who reported the issue says, 'That supervisor is a lazy glutton. They only focus on food and entertainment, and they are bone idle. They don't want to suffer even a little bit of hardship in their duty, and they always slack off deceitfully and make up excuses to avoid their work and shirk their responsibilities. They aren't suited to be a supervisor.' The false leader will answer, 'They were great when they were selected as supervisor. What you're saying isn't true, or even if it is, it's just a temporary manifestation.' The false leader won't try and find out more about the supervisor's situation, instead they will judge and pass a verdict on the matter based on their past impressions of that supervisor. Regardless of who reports problems with the supervisor, the false leader will ignore them. The supervisor isn't doing actual work, and the work of the church has nearly come to a standstill, but the false leader doesn't care,**

it's like they're not even involved. ... false leaders have a fatal flaw: They are quick to trust people based on their own imaginings. And this is caused by not understanding the truth, is it not? How does God's word reveal the essence of corrupt humankind? Why should they trust in people when God doesn't? False leaders are too arrogant and self-righteous, are they not? What they think is, 'I couldn't have misjudged this person, there shouldn't be any problems with this person that I've judged to be suitable; they are definitely not someone who indulges in eating, drinking and entertainment, or who likes comfort and hates hard work. They are absolutely dependable and trustworthy. They will not change; if they did, that would mean I was wrong about them, wouldn't it?' What kind of logic is this? Are they some kind of expert? Do they have x-ray vision? Do they have that special skill? You could live with a person for one or two years, but would you be able to see who they really are without a suitable environment to lay their nature essence utterly bare? If they were not revealed by God, you could live side-by-side with them for three, or even five, years, and would still struggle to see just what kind of nature essence they have. And how much more is that true when you rarely see them, are rarely with them? False leaders blithely trust a person based on a fleeting impression or someone else's positive appraisal of them, and dare to entrust the work of the church to such a person. In this, are they not being extremely blind? Are they not acting recklessly? And when they work like this, are the false leaders not being extremely irresponsible?"

(The Word, Vol. 5. The Responsibilities of Leaders and Workers. The Responsibilities of Leaders and Workers (3)). Having read God's words, the leader said, "We can't truly see through to a person's essence, so we need to inspect and follow up on their work regularly. Then we can find deviations and issues in their work and

change and resolve them in time. Liu Jing was about to bring the church's work to a complete standstill after doing work for just a few months. These are the consequences of your being too conceited, of blindly putting too much trust in her and not following up or checking on her work. That is doing evil!" With the exposure of God's words and the leader's fellowship, I felt fear after the fact, and I was upset and guilty. I hated myself for not looking at things based on God's words, but blindly trusting her, which harmed the church's work. Thinking back on how I'd treated Liu Jing, it wasn't that I couldn't discover her issues, it was that every time I did, I stuck to my guns. I went by my previous knowledge about her to blindly determine that she was a responsible person with a burden for her duty who deserved to be trusted. Both the disclosure of the facts and the exposure of God's words finally showed me that behaving well and doing some real work for a period of time doesn't mean someone will always be that way. None of us have yet gained the truth, our life dispositions haven't changed, we're controlled by our corrupt nature, we may still muddle through and deceive God, and we'll just do as we please sometimes, so we're not worthy of trust. You can't really understand a person without a long period of interaction and observation, and, even then, you still might not entirely know them. You also have to understand the truth to see through a person's essence. I'd just worked alongside Liu Jing for a short time, so I thought I knew her really well and wouldn't misjudge her. I trusted her so much that I didn't follow up or check on her work. The leader had reminded me repeatedly, but I still blindly trusted my own judgment—I was so arrogant, so conceited, and had really taken no responsibility for the work. I was very regretful when I realized this, and I didn't want to keep being that way.

Later, I reflected on myself—why had I trusted Liu Jing so much without following up on her work? What was the root of this? One day, I

read this in God's words: **"It's safe to say most people consider the phrase 'Neither doubt those you employ nor employ those you doubt' as the truth, and they are misled and bound by it. They are disturbed and influenced by it when selecting or using people, and even let it dictate their actions. As a result, many leaders and workers always have difficulties and misgivings whenever they check up on church work and promote and use people. Ultimately, all they can do is comfort themselves with the words 'Neither doubt those you employ nor employ those you doubt.' Whenever they inspect or inquire about the work, they think, "Neither doubt those you employ nor employ those you doubt." I should trust my brothers and sisters, and after all, the Holy Spirit scrutinizes people, so I shouldn't always doubt and supervise others.' They have been influenced by this phrase, haven't they? What are the consequences brought about by the influence of this phrase? First of all, if someone subscribes to this idea of 'Neither doubt those you employ nor employ those you doubt,' will they inspect and guide others' work? Will they supervise and follow up on people's work? If this person trusts everyone they use and never inspects or guides them in their work, and never supervises them, are they doing their duty loyally? Can they carry out the work of the church in a competent manner and complete God's commission? Are they being loyal to God's commission? Second, this is not merely a failure to keep to God's word and your duties, this is taking Satan's schemes and philosophy for worldly dealings as if they were the truth, and following and practicing them. You are obeying Satan and living by a satanic philosophy, aren't you? You are not a person who submits to God, much less a person who abides by God's words. You are a complete scoundrel. Putting God's words aside, and instead taking a satanic**

phrase and practicing it as the truth, is betraying the truth and God! You work in God's house, yet the principles for your actions are satanic logic and philosophy for worldly dealings, what kind of person are you? This is someone who betrays God and someone who gravely shames God. What is the essence of this act? Openly condemning God and openly denying the truth. Isn't that the essence of it? (It is.) In addition to not following God's will, you are allowing one of Satan's devilish sayings and satanic philosophies for worldly dealings to run rampant in the church. In doing this, you become Satan's accomplice, assist Satan in carrying out its activities within the church, and disturb and disrupt church work. The essence of this problem is very serious, isn't it?" (The Word, Vol. 4. Exposing Antichrists. Excursus One: What the Truth Is). God's words exposed my state. I was living by the satanic philosophy of "Neither doubt those you employ nor employ those you doubt," thinking that since I felt a person was okay, and they were still in place, I had to trust them. That's why I had so much trust in Liu Jing and I didn't follow up or get to know her work. Even when her problems came to light and the leader reminded me to check on her work, I still thought nothing of it. I thought following up and supervising her work meant a lack of trust, and even though I'd found out she wasn't doing real work, when I'd heard her crying, talking about her real difficulties and expressing regret, I'd decided to believe her rather than dismiss her, allowing her to harm the church's work and bring great losses to brothers' and sisters' life entry. As a leader, not only had I failed to protect the church's work, but I'd acted as a shield for a false leader. I'd become a stumbling block and an obstacle in the path to the church's work. These were the consequences of me treating people based on the satanic fallacy of "Neither doubt those you employ nor employ those you doubt." Discerning it now based on God's words, I saw how truly

absurd this perspective was. It was entirely contradictory to God's words and what He requires. God's requirement that leaders supervise and follow up on work is determined based on corrupt mankind's essence. Because man has a corrupt disposition, before we've gained the truth or changed our life dispositions, we're unreliable and can't be trusted. Even people with good humanity may go their own way and disrupt and disturb the church's work, because they don't know the truth, aren't principled in their actions, and have corrupt dispositions. No one can deny this fact. God requires that leaders and workers supervise work because God understands people's essence. Supervising and checking up on work is helpful for our duties, and it benefits the church's work. But that satanic idea, "Don't doubt those you employ," gets us to blindly trust others, thinking that handing a job over means we can let that person do whatever they want, and that checking up on and supervising their work represents a lack of trust. If we stick to this perspective while doing our duty, and we don't follow up on or supervise work in time, it can only delay and harm the church's work. I did my duty without viewing things on the basis of God's words, or practicing what He requires, but instead believing in and upholding satanic philosophies and abiding by Satan's fallacies as if they were the truth. This was denying the truth and betraying God. It was also acting as Satan's accomplice and disrupting and disturbing the church's work. I got more afraid as I thought about it. I saw I was lacking principles in my duty, and that I wasn't going by God's words or demands. I was unwittingly doing evil. The consequences of not doing my duty based on the truth principles were truly frightening!

One day, I read two passages of God's words: **"Do you believe the view 'Neither doubt those you employ nor employ those you doubt' is correct? Is this phrase the truth? Why would he use this phrase in the**

work of God's house and in doing his duty? What is the problem here? 'Neither doubt those you employ nor employ those you doubt' are clearly the words of the nonbelievers, words that come from Satan—so why does he treat them as the truth? Why can't he tell if these words are right or wrong? These are patently the words of man, the words of corrupt humankind, they are simply not the truth, they are utterly at odds with the words of God, and should not serve as the criterion for people's actions, comportment, and worship of God. So how should this phrase be approached? If you are truly capable of discernment, what kind of truth principle should you use in its place to serve as your principle of practice? It should be to 'perform your duty with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.' To act with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind is to be constrained by no one; it is to be of a single heart and mind, and no more. This is your responsibility and your duty, and you should perform it well, as doing this is perfectly natural and justified. Whatever problems you encounter, you should act according to the principles. Handle them however you ought to; if pruning is called for, so be it, and if dismissal is called for, so be it. In short, act based on God's words and on the truth. Isn't this the principle?" (The Word, Vol. 4. Exposing Antichrists. Excursus One: What the Truth Is). "No matter what important work a leader or worker does, and what the nature of this work is, their number one priority is to understand and grasp how work is going on. They must be there in person to follow up on things and ask questions, getting their information first-hand. They must not simply rely on hearsay or listen to other people's reports. Instead, they must observe with their own eyes the situation of the personnel and how work is progressing, and understand what difficulties there are, whether any

areas are at odds with requirements of the Above, whether there are violations of principles, whether there exist any disturbances or disruptions, whether there is a lack of necessary equipment or related instructional materials regarding professional work—they must stay on top of all of this. No matter how many reports they listen to, or how much they glean from hearsay, neither of these beats paying a personal visit; it is more accurate and reliable for them to see things with their own eyes. Once they are familiar with all aspects of the situation, they will have a good idea of what's going on. They especially must have a clear and accurate grasp of who is of good caliber and worthy of cultivation, as only this allows them to accurately cultivate and use people, which is crucial if leaders and workers are to do their work well. Leaders and workers should have a path and principles by which to cultivate and train people of good caliber. Furthermore, they should have a grasp and understanding of the various kinds of problems and difficulties that exist in church work, and know how to solve them, and they should also have their own ideas and suggestions for how work is to progress, or its future prospects. If they are able to speak with clarity about such things with their eyes closed, without any doubt or misgivings, then the work will be much easier to carry out. And by working in this way, a leader will be fulfilling their responsibilities, will they not? They must be well aware of how to resolve the abovementioned issues in the work, and they must often ponder these things. When they encounter difficulties, they must fellowship and discuss these things with everyone, seeking the truth in order to resolve the issues. By doing real work with both feet planted firmly on the ground in this way, there will be no difficulties that cannot be solved”

(The Word, Vol. 5. The Responsibilities of Leaders and Workers. The Responsibilities of Leaders and

Workers (4)). God's words gave me the path of practice for doing real work. We have to fulfill our responsibilities with our whole heart, and our whole mind. No matter who is being used, whether we know them or not, a leader with a true burden and true sense of responsibility will constantly follow up and get to know the progress of work, immediately resolve issues as they're discovered, and reassign the unsuitable personnel in a timely manner. They will also cooperate harmoniously with everyone, and seek the truth together to resolve any difficulties or problems that are encountered. This ensures various items of the church work have orderly and proper progress. Thinking over God's words, I saw why I still clung to the satanic fallacy, "Don't doubt those you employ," even though I knew I had to be responsible in my duty. It was because I was holding on to an absurd viewpoint, thinking that supervising someone's work was a lack of trust, that it was constraining them and denying them freedom, like being a supervisor out in the world. I saw now that when God's house requires that leaders and workers supervise and implement work, it is not to constrain anyone or distrust them. Rather, this is done to find problems and reverse deviations quickly. It's also to help brothers and sisters do their duties well and to protect the interests of the church. One of the major responsibilities of a leader and worker is to supervise and follow up on work, understand and grasp each person's approach to work, find deviations and problems, and rectify and resolve them expediently. This minimizes losses due to mistakes arising from irresponsibility in people's duties. That's taking responsibility for brothers' and sisters' life entry and the church's work. After that, I went to inspect each church leader's work in detail, and no matter whether they were familiar to me, I earnestly looked into the progress of the various works they were responsible for. Through that actual check-up, I found a leader surnamed Xia who wasn't doing real work or

resolving real problems. He also had a malicious humanity, attacking and excluding others; these were deeds of a truly deplorable nature, and we dismissed him right away. We found out about lots of other evil deeds he'd done later through the exposure and reports of brothers and sisters, and in the end, he still didn't repent after a lot of fellowship exposing him. We ultimately determined he was an antichrist and expelled him from the church. Seeing these results, I looked back with fear. Without going through all that with Liu Jing, which changed my mistaken viewpoint of "Don't doubt those you employ," I wouldn't have thought to supervise or follow up on Xia's work. Then that antichrist would have kept harming brothers and sisters in the church. The consequences of that would have been unthinkable. Putting this into practice showed me the importance of supervising and checking up on work. I felt that I had finally done some real work and felt at ease in my heart.

This experience showed me that doing duty without viewing people and things in accordance with God's words or practicing the truth, and instead upholding satanic logic and ideas, is resisting God and disrupting and disturbing the work of the church. We have to follow God's requirements on following up and supervising work to do a duty well and protect the church's work. The judgment and exposure of God's words turned my fallacious view around. Thank God!

5. It Takes Honesty to Perform a Duty Well

By Marion, USA

I'm in charge of watering new believers in the church. Some new believers joined not too long ago, and I saw that a few of them didn't talk much in gatherings and weren't coming regularly. They only came when they felt like it. When I reached out for individual fellowship, they liked talking about how to make money and build up a family fortune, but as soon as faith came up, they found excuses to get off the call. I felt like they weren't interested in the truth and didn't seem like true believers. But I wasn't entirely sure since they were new to the faith, so I kept on supporting them. They were still that way after some time passed and slowly stopped attending gatherings. Only then did I tell the leader about their situations. She asked me, "How have you been watering them? They attended normally when they were with other waterers, so how come things are different now they're with you? Have you really fulfilled your responsibilities and fellowshiped clearly? If new believers don't gather regularly on account of us doing our duty perfunctorily, then the responsibility is ours alone." I knew she was saying that out of her own sense of responsibility for the work, but I couldn't stop thinking up justifications. "Everyone can change," I thought to myself. "Just because the new believers attended regularly before didn't mean they always will. Besides, they weren't gathering regularly when I first met them, so this isn't a sudden change. I just wanted to water them for a little while and see how things went, which is why I didn't tell you right away. If you called me to account for them not attending, I'd have to bear the consequences, and I might be pruned or even dismissed. If I'd known that to begin with, I would've talked to her about it earlier so I wouldn't have to take all the

responsibility.” The leader didn’t hold me accountable for this, once she’d looked into it, but after that I couldn’t help being alert to this in my interactions with new believers. If I saw that one of them had a problem or wasn’t coming to gatherings, I’d rush to tell the leader. Sometimes the leader asked me what my point was and if I intended to stop watering them. I’d say, “No, you’re the leader. I just wanted you to know what’s going on with the new believers.” She wouldn’t add anything after I said that. Sometimes after I told her about this, she said to keep watering them for a bit and if they really didn’t want to gather, then they couldn’t be forced and we’d just have to give up on them. I’d totally agree, and think, “Now that the leader knows about the situation with the new believers, all I need to do is offer support. If the support works then so much the better, and if not, and the new believers don’t want to attend anymore, then it shouldn’t come as a surprise and the leader wouldn’t say I’d been irresponsible in my duty.” With that in mind, I stopped being so attentive in my duty. Every day, I just watered in the routine way. Whenever I called a new believer, I’d fellowship for a bit if they answered, and not worry about it if they didn’t. I thought there was nothing I could do if they didn’t answer, and I didn’t think about what I could be doing to help resolve their issues. In a gathering later, the leader said that when inquiring about watering work from then on, while listening to what waterers said about the new believers’ situations, she would also wish to know what aspects of the truth the waterers had fellowshiped with them and specifically how they supported them. On that basis, she would gauge whether waterers were doing real work. If a waterer wasn’t putting their heart into fellowshiping on the truth with new believers, and this led to them not attending regularly or even dropping out, then it would be the waterer’s responsibility. When I heard that I thought about how, when fellowshiping with new believers, I didn’t note down

which words of God I read or what truths I fellowshiped on. It meant I'd have no proof of the work if a new believer stopped attending gatherings. Would the leader think I wasn't doing any real work and that I was irresponsible in watering, and then prune me? So, I started paying more attention to sending messages and words of God to new believers, and keeping a record of what we discussed each time I fellowshiped with a new believer. Sometimes a new believer didn't respond when I sent them a message, but I wasn't too bothered. I figured that I'd sent them all the words of God I should have and fellowshiped on what I needed to. If they stopped going to gatherings, the leader could see my records and probably wouldn't call me irresponsible.

After some time, the leader noticed that a few of the new believers still didn't want to gather, and asked how I'd watered them. I readily showed my notes to her, thinking, "It's lucky I've prepared and kept records. Otherwise I wouldn't have anything concrete to show and then who knows what the leader would say to me then." While I was congratulating myself, the leader said, "I can't see any problems from these notes, but several new believers have stopped attending gatherings one after another so there must be an issue with your work. I can't see clearly what that may be right now, but in our exchanges recently you've talked a lot about issues with the new believers, which is a little out of the ordinary. You need to ask yourself where the problem lies. If new believers are withdrawing from the church and leaving the faith on account of you doing a perfunctory job and not watering them well, that's a matter of you being irresponsible and not properly doing your duty." What she said came as a real blow. I was stunned. I was afraid that if problems with me were causing new believers to drop out, that was doing evil. So, I prayed to God, "God, it was with Your permission that the leader surprised me with this today, so there must

be a lesson for me to learn. I don't wish harm to come to these new believers because of my issues, but I'm feeling numb about it and don't know where my problem lies. Please enlighten and guide me to know myself and make timely changes."

Over the next few days, I prayed a lot to God about this. Then one day, I read an experiential testimony article with a passage of God's words that moved me. God says: **"You should examine yourself carefully to see whether you are a correct person. Are your goals and intentions made with Me in mind? Are all your words and actions said and done in My presence? I examine all of your thoughts and ideas. Do you not feel guilty? You put on a false front for others to see and you calmly assume an air of self-righteousness; you do this to shield yourself. You do this to conceal your evil, and you even think up ways to push that evil onto someone else. What deceitfulness dwells in your heart!"** (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. Utterances of Christ in the Beginning, Chapter 13). God's words expose that people will lie and put on an act to push responsibility onto others, in order to protect their interests and cover up their evil doing, and in this way protect themselves. It is deceitful behavior. I felt like my own state was exposed by these words. I began to self-reflect, asking why I was always telling the leader about problems with the new believers. Whenever I saw someone had issues or wasn't coming to gatherings, I rushed to tell the leader. It looked like I was just sharing the facts, but in fact I had personal goals and intentions. I was afraid the leader would hold me responsible or even dismiss me if someone stopped attending, so I quickly preempted that by sharing the new believer's problems, giving the leader the false impression that the new believer was no good and that I wasn't responsible. If I couldn't adequately support them and they stopped attending, that was their problem. That way my hands would be totally

clean. If, afterward, they wanted to go to gatherings again, I could claim credit. At this point in my self-reflection, I felt startled. I'd never thought that I concealed such vile, despicable motives in my words. I was so deceitful!

Later, I wondered how I could have unconsciously slipped into doing something so dishonest and deceitful. I'd only begun understanding myself a little bit by reading God's words exposing people's corrupt dispositions, during my reflections. God says: **"The wickedness of antichrists has one obvious characteristic, and I will share with you the secret of discerning it: It is that in their speech and action alike, you cannot fathom their depths or see into their hearts. When they speak to you, their eyes always swivel around, and you cannot tell what sort of scheme they are hatching. Sometimes, they make you feel that they are loyal or quite sincere, but this is not the case—you can never see through them. You have a particular feeling in your heart, a sense that there is a deep subtlety to their thoughts, an unfathomable depth, that they are devious"** (The Word, Vol. 4. Exposing Antichrists. Item Seven: They Are Wicked, Insidious, and Deceitful (Part Two)). **"Antichrists are devious in their behavior. How are they devious? They behave always in a way that depends on trickery, and their words give nothing away, so it is hard for people to fathom their intentions and goals. That is devious. They do not come to conclusions easily in anything they say or do; they make it so that their subordinates and listeners can sense their intent, and those people, having understood the antichrist, act according to their agenda and motivations and carry out their orders. If a task is completed, the antichrist is happy. If it is not, no one can find anything to hold against them, or fathom the motivations, intentions, or goals behind what they do. The deviousness of what antichrists do lies in hidden plots and**

secret goals, all meant to deceive, toy with, and control everyone else. This is the essence of devious behavior. Deviousness is not simple lying or doing something bad; instead, it involves bigger intents and goals, which are unfathomable to ordinary people. If you have done something you do not want anyone to know about, and tell a lie, does that count as deviousness? (No.) That is just deceitfulness, and it does not rise to the level of deviousness. What makes deviousness deeper than deceitfulness? (People cannot fathom it.) It is difficult for people to fathom it. That is one part of it. What else? (People do not have anything to hold against a devious person.) That is right. The point is that it is hard for people to find anything to hold against them. Even if some people know that person has done bad things, they cannot determine whether they are a good person or a bad person, an evil person or an antichrist. People cannot see through them, but think they are good, and can be misled by them. That is deviousness. People are prone in general to telling lies and hatching little plots. That is just deceitfulness. But antichrists are more insidious than common deceitful people. They are like the devil kings; no one can fathom what they do. They can do many evil things in the name of justice, and they harm people, but people still sing their praises. This is called deviousness” (The Word, Vol. 4. Exposing Antichrists. Item Six). I saw from God’s words that antichrists have a wicked disposition and do things in devious ways. It’s different from displaying the corruption of deceitfulness. Being deceitful means clearly telling lies and deceiving, and it’s easy to see. Doing things deviously means hiding one’s personal intentions, goals, and agenda very deeply, creating a false impression so that others can’t see any problem with what they say and do. And even if others do feel there’s a problem, they can’t find anything to hold against them. It is very difficult for people to fathom

them. That's how a devious person misleads people and achieves their secret objectives. Examining myself in light of God's words, I saw that while I quickly and proactively spoke with the leader about new believers, giving the false impression that I had a sense of burden with my duty and was happy to accept her supervision, I was in fact reflecting the issues with the new believers to prime her to have a negative impression of the new believers who weren't attending regularly. That way, if a new believer stopped attending gatherings someday, she wouldn't hold me accountable for it. Also, when the leader wanted to know about my work in detail, there appeared to be no issues with the content of my fellowshiping. I'd arranged times to fellowship with the new believers and had been sending them words of God, so the leader would see me as diligent and loving toward them. But in reality I knew I wasn't at all sincere in my fellowship with new believers. I reluctantly went through the motions because I knew the leader would review work records and I would need to account for her. Thinking back on it, I even used various tactics, misdirecting others when I spoke and carefully giving nothing away when I did things, so as to not be held accountable, and protect my status and future. Clearly, my heart wasn't in my duty, and this had led some new believers to stop attending regularly. The leader also felt like there were problems in my duty, but she didn't know what they were and couldn't find evidence to hold me accountable. I was so good at misleading people. I never previously linked the way I behaved and acted with being devious. I always thought that it was mostly older people with long experience who are shrewd, calculating, and devious, whereas I was young, without much experience or a complicated mindset. Calling my behavior devious didn't seem to fit. Yet the facts showed clearly that I had the wicked disposition of antichrists. Then, something else occurred to me. There was a new believer who often asked

questions and was very forthright. If she didn't understand what I fellowshiped during a gathering, she'd directly contradict what I said, which was embarrassing. To save face I didn't want to be in gatherings with her anymore, but I couldn't say so openly because I was afraid the leader would prune me. I wanted to find a way to foist her onto another waterer. On one occasion, the new believer casually mentioned that there were fewer people in this group, compared with her previous one. I used the opportunity to tell the leader that she thought our gathering was too small, and that she liked larger groups, and asked the leader to put her into a different one. The leader arranged it right away. In this way, I managed to get the new believer out of my group. The leader even thought, mistakenly, that I had a sense of burden for the duty and was thinking of the new believer. I really was deceitful and wicked, and given to fooling others.

Later I ate and drank more of God's words about my state. I read these words: **"Let Me tell you, what God despises the most and wants to give up on are these kinds of intransigent people. They are fully aware of their wrongdoings but do not repent, they never admit their faults and always make excuses and arguments to justify themselves and deflect blame, and they try to find smooth and evasive ways around the issue, shielding their actions from others' eyes, and making continuous mistakes without the slightest degree of repentance or confession in their hearts. Such a person is very troublesome, and it is not easy for them to achieve salvation. They are the very people that God wants to abandon"** (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. In Believing in God, What Is Most Important Is to Practice and Experience His Words). Thinking this over, I realized that no matter what happens, the key thing is to accept the truth. The kind of person who won't own up to making a mistake in their duty, and keeps on justifying or covering up for themselves even when pruned,

doesn't remotely accept the truth. To God, they are repugnant and detestable. I thought about how the church had assigned me as a waterer, and that I ought to help and support new believers with love and patience, fellowshiping clearly on the truths of visions and helping them quickly establish themselves on the true way. I fully understood that some new believers weren't able to attend gatherings regularly, and that responsibility rested with me, but when the leader inquired about it and pruned me I didn't accept this from God or accept the leader's reproach and reminder. Instead of thinking right away about how to support new believers, I started being calculating, slippery, and devious to cover up for not properly doing my duty. I was keeping the leader in the dark so she wouldn't find out about the issues and deviations in my work. I felt smug about getting away with this, and reveled in my own cleverness. But now I understood, from God's words, that in fact God knew all about my furtive machinations and petty tricks. There was no hiding them. The issues with how I did my duty were bound to come to light. If not for the leader alerting me, I wouldn't have known to self-reflect, much less have wished to repent. I was truly numb. I didn't accept the truth, or summarize and rectify the deviations and problems in my work. I thought only about pulling the wool over the leader's eyes to save face and protect my status. I was slippery, and devious, to cover up for the reality that I wasn't doing my duty well. I didn't put my heart into watering new believers and helping to tackle their problems and difficulties, and as a result some of them didn't have their problems resolved for a long time. Even now, some of them weren't attending gatherings regularly. What particularly scared me afterward was that the new believer I had pushed into a different group didn't want to attend gatherings anymore because she wasn't used to the sudden change of waterer. Other brothers and sisters had to fellowship with her, patiently and

for a long time, before she agreed to come back to gatherings. It was really upsetting to think about how I'd been and what I'd done. It is not easy for every new believer to accept God's work of the last days, and it requires a lot of painstaking effort on their behalf. But I had been so lax about this. I was doing evil. If not for the leader's alert and pruning, I wouldn't have realized how close I was to the edge. I didn't want to keep living according to the wicked disposition of an antichrist. I wanted to step off that evil path and repent to God.

Just when I gained some knowledge, the leader asked me about my recent state. I told her about what I'd come to realize through self-reflection. She sent me a passage of God's words. God says: **"Practicing honesty covers many aspects. In other words, the standard for being honest is not merely achieved through one regard; you must be up to standard in many regards before you can be honest. Some people always think that they need only manage not to lie in order to be honest. Is this view correct? Does being honest merely involve not lying? No—it also relates to several other aspects. Firstly, no matter what you are faced with, be it something you have seen with your own eyes or something someone else has told you, be it interacting with people or sorting out a problem, be it the duty you ought to be performing or something that God has entrusted to you, you must always approach it with an honest heart. How should one practice approaching things with an honest heart? Say what you think and speak honestly; do not speak empty, pompous, or pleasant-sounding words, do not say flattering or hypocritical false things, but speak the words that are in your heart. This is being someone honest. Expressing the true thoughts and views that are in your heart—this is what honest people are supposed to do. If you never say what you think, and the**

words fester in your heart, and what you say is always at odds with what you think, that is not what an honest person does. For example, suppose that you do not perform your duty well, and when people ask what is going on, you say, 'I want to do my duty well, but for various reasons, I have not.' Actually, you know in your heart that you were not diligent, but you do not tell the truth. Instead you find all kinds of reasons, justifications, and excuses to cover up the facts and to avoid responsibility. Is that what an honest person does? (No.) You fool people and muddle through by saying these things. But the essence of what is inside you, of the intentions within you, is a corrupt disposition. If you cannot bring the things and intentions within you out into the open and dissect them, they cannot be purified—and that is no small matter! You must speak truthfully, 'I've been procrastinating a bit in doing my duty. I have been perfunctory and inattentive. When I'm in a good mood, I can give a little effort. When I'm in a bad mood, I slack off and don't want to put in the effort, and covet the comforts of the flesh. So, my attempts to do my duty are ineffective. The situation has been turning around these past few days, and I'm trying to give my all, improve my efficiency, and perform my duty well.' This is speaking from the heart. The other way of speaking was not from the heart. Due to your fear of being pruned, of people discovering your problems, and of people holding you accountable, you found all kinds of reasons, justifications, and excuses to cover up the facts, first getting other people to stop talking about the situation, then shifting responsibility, in order to avoid being pruned. This is the source of your lies. No matter how much liars talk, some of what they say is sure to be truth and factual. But some key things they say will contain a bit of falsity and a bit of their motive. So, it is very important to discern and

differentiate what is true and what is false. This is not easy to do, however. Some of what they say will be tainted and embellished, some of what they say will accord with the facts, and some of what they say will contradict the facts; with fact and fiction thus muddled, it is hard to distinguish the true from the false. This is the most deceitful kind of person, and the most difficult to identify. If they cannot accept the truth or practice honesty, they will definitely be eliminated. Which is the path that people should choose, then? Which one is the way to practice honesty? You should learn to speak the truth and be able to fellowship openly about your real states and problems. That is how honest people practice, and such practice is correct” (The Word, Vol. 3. The

Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. Only an Honest Person Can Live Out True Human Likeness).

Reading this passage of God’s words was really touching for me. God knows us so well. He knows we’ll all have problems and deviations in our duties. It’s inevitable. But the key is what type of attitude someone has when problems come up. Are they truthful, honestly admitting and correcting an error, or do they try to justify themselves and engage in deception to cover up the problem? I used to live by my satanic disposition. I was deceitful and duplicitous, and heading down the wrong road. I couldn’t keep on that way. I wanted to be an honest person and accept God’s scrutiny. No matter what deviations or problems came up in my duty, or if the leader inquired about my work, I had to face it with sincerity and deal with it honestly, being truthful and saying whatever was in my heart. I needed to tell it like it was, and be straight up about it if there was something I’d neglected to do, rather than lying or trying to argue my way out. In addition to speaking honestly, I wanted to practice regularly reflecting on the intentions underlying my words and actions, and change

them straightaway if they weren't right. I had to stop hoodwinking people to protect my own interests.

One day, I noticed that a new believer had missed several consecutive gatherings. I called him a few times, but he didn't pick up and wasn't responding to messages. I didn't know what was going on with him. I couldn't help worrying that he would stop coming to gatherings and wondered if I should mention it to the leader so that she wouldn't hold me accountable if he stopped attending someday. At that thought, I realized my old issue of being tricky was making a reappearance. Then I remembered a passage of God's words: **"You do not need to use any methods to protect your reputation, image, and status, nor do you need to cover up or disguise your mistakes. You do not need to engage in these useless efforts. If you can let these things go, you will be very relaxed, you will live without constraints or pain, and you will live entirely in the light"** (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. Part Three). It's true. God scrutinizes our innermost hearts. I may be able to fool people with my devious ploys, but God scrutinizes everything as clear as day, and He will reveal everything in the end. I was doing my duty to satisfy God, not working for any individual. I didn't need to play games and cover up for myself in front of people. Like in the past, there had been new believers who I'd done my best to support but who still wouldn't attend gatherings or show an interest in faith and the truth. When the leader understood the real situation, she determined that they weren't true believers and therefore didn't hold me to account. I could see that the church has principles in how it treats people. There was no need to cleverly absolve myself of responsibility or contrive a way out. I'd lived by my satanic disposition before and hadn't properly performed my duty. This time I couldn't just muddle through. I had to get my heart in the right place and fulfill my

responsibilities. I quietly prayed to God, ready to change and do whatever I could to help and support the new believers. If I fellowshiped on all the truths that I ought to, and still they didn't want to attend gatherings, then I could face that squarely and give the leader an honest picture of the situation. After changing my mentality, I contacted that new believer again and was surprised when he responded quickly, saying he'd been busy with work and was really tired, which was why he hadn't been at gatherings. I fellowshiped with him using God's words, and from these he understood God's intention and found a path of practice, and started attending regularly again. After that, whenever new believers weren't able to attend gatherings regularly, I did my utmost to support and help them, and fellowshiped with them on God's words. It was with a sincere heart that I supported them. Subsequently, most of the new believers I watered were able to attend gatherings regularly. Practicing in this way makes me feel at ease and at peace. Thanks be to God!

6. My Agonizing Days of Misunderstanding God

By Marissa, Netherlands

In 2017, I was elected to be a church leader. At first, I produced some results in my duty, but later on, I craved the blessing of status and stopped doing actual work. I also didn't follow up with church work using the excuse that I had poor caliber and couldn't understand professional skills. When Sister Julia, an upper leader, asked me about the work, I couldn't answer her at all, nor did I understand the actual difficulties brothers and sisters faced in doing their duties. Julia then pointed out my problems to help me, but I didn't turn around. There were a couple of times when, in front of several deacons, she exposed me, saying I didn't do actual work, was slacking off in my duty, was too deceitful, and so on. I thought Julia was trying to give me a hard time and embarrass me in front of others, so I became resistant in my heart.

Once during a gathering, I found some mistakes in Julia's work, so I judged her in front of the brothers and sisters. This caused them to mistakenly think she was a false leader. What I did disturbed the church's work. After the matter was exposed, I worried that my leader would prune me and adjust my duty, so I hurried to apologize to Julia and dissected and reflected on myself in front of the brothers and sisters. I thought this matter would pass just like that. But to my surprise, a few days later my upper leaders approached me, saying that my failure to do actual work was already seriously negligent, and that I also didn't accept being pruned and secretly undermined others. This was disrupting the church's work. After hearing that, I had a hard time accepting it and kept arguing in my heart: It wasn't that I didn't want to do actual work, but my caliber was too poor to do it. As for secretly undermining others, I had already acknowledged my

mistake. I apologized to Julia and dissected my corruption in front of the brothers and sisters. So, why would you still hold on tightly to this matter? At that time, no matter how they fellowshiped with me, I could not accept it. So based on my state, one of the leaders read these words of God to me: **“Those among brothers and sisters who are always giving vent to their negativity are lackeys of Satan, and they disturb the church. Such people must one day be expelled and eliminated. In their belief in God, if people do not have a God-fearing heart, if they do not have a heart of submission to God, then not only will they be unable to do any work for Him, but on the contrary will become those who disturb His work and who resist Him. Believing in God but not submitting to or fearing Him, and instead resisting Him, is the greatest disgrace for a believer. If believers are just as casual and unrestrained in their speech and conduct as nonbelievers are, then they are even more wicked than nonbelievers; they are archetypal demons. Those who give vent to their poisonous, malicious talk within the church, who spread rumors, foment disharmony, and form cliques among the brothers and sisters—they should have been expelled from the church. Yet because now is a different era of God’s work, these people are restricted, for they are decidedly to be eliminated”** (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. A Warning to Those Who Do Not Practice the Truth). The more I listened, the more afraid I felt in my heart, knowing that judging Julia had indeed caused disturbances to the church work. But when I heard words like, **“lackeys of Satan,” “disturb the church,” “be expelled,”** and **“be eliminated,”** I didn’t dare to acknowledge them, fearing that if I did, wouldn’t I be condemned as a result? Then how could I ever gain salvation? I didn’t want to accept this fact, so I complained about the leader, thinking that she was intentionally using God’s words to attack and condemn me. I became really

emotional and said, “You’re not fellowshiping the truth to help me solve the problem at all! You’re just attacking me!” The leaders realized that I didn’t have any knowledge about myself, and kept fellowshiping to help me. They also fellowshiped on their own experiences to guide me in understanding myself. However, no matter what they said, I still had no understanding. Eventually, when they saw that I wasn’t doing any actual work, that I also didn’t accept the truth, and didn’t even have an attitude of repentance, the upper leaders dismissed me.

At that moment, I suddenly went limp. I thought about how I had been a believer in God for more than ten years, and wasn’t a new believer of just two or three years. God’s work is now approaching its conclusion. It’s already the time to reveal and classify people according to their kind. At this critical juncture, I was revealed as someone who does not accept the truth. Doesn’t this mean I have been eliminated? I feared that from this point onward, it would be useless for me to try harder in my faith and that I would have no future. I felt so negative. My state worsened every day. I felt like a good-for-nothing who couldn’t do any duty well. Constantly feeling abandoned by God, my heart was filled with fear and restlessness every day. Even though brothers and sisters continued to fellowship with me about God’s intention, urging me to reflect on myself and learn from my failure, I stubbornly believed that I had already been revealed as someone who didn’t pursue the truth, so I thought it would be a waste of time to pursue further. From then on, no matter what duties the church assigned me, I approached them with negativity and passivity, being perfunctory and achieving little to no results. Finally, based on principles, my leaders stopped my duties and isolated me for reflection. At that moment, my mind went blank; it felt like a death sentence. I realized I was completely finished. Without a duty, how could there be any hope for me to attain

salvation? During those days, I lived like a walking corpse, often feeling that I was spurned by God. I felt too ashamed to pray, and I didn't feel worthy to read God's words. At that time, there were brothers and sisters who supported me and read God's words to me. However, I believed that God's words were for those who pursued the truth, not for me, so I couldn't take them in whatsoever. Hadn't the Lord Jesus said, "Do not give dogs what is sacred; do not throw your pearls to pigs"? How could God speak to someone like me? During that time, I felt afraid and restless every day. If God had truly abandoned me, what was the point of my existence? I might as well die from some punishment one day. My heart was filled with fear, struggling in torment every day. Later, something happened that deeply moved me.

I found a nursing job where my employer displayed good humanity and took good care of me in life. Encouraged by this, I shared the gospel with my employer, who joyfully accepted God's gospel of the last days. I was very excited. Through this experience, I realized that God had not abandoned me but had continued to show mercy and save me. Overwhelmed with guilt, I cried out to God in tears, "God, I don't want to remain negative like this; please save me!" I saw a passage of God's words that says: **"When some people read God's words and see God condemning people in His words, they form notions and feel conflicted. For example, God's words say that you don't accept the truth, so God doesn't like you or accept you, that you are an evildoer, an antichrist, that He gets upset just looking at you and that He doesn't want you. People read these words and think, 'These words are aimed at me. God has determined that He doesn't want me, and since God has abandoned me, I won't believe in God anymore either.' There are those who, when reading God's words, often develop notions and misunderstandings**

because God exposes people's corrupt states and says some things condemning people. They become negative and weak, thinking that God's words were directed at them, that God is giving up on them and won't save them. They become negative to the point of tears and don't want to follow God anymore. This is actually a misunderstanding of God. When you do not understand the meaning of God's words, you should not try to delineate God. You don't know what kind of person God abandons, or under what circumstances He gives up on people, or under what circumstances He puts people aside; there are principles and contexts to all of this. If you don't have full insight into these detailed matters, you'll be very prone to hypersensitivity and you'll delimit yourself based on one word from God. Isn't that problematic? When God judges people, what is the chief aspect of them that He condemns? What God judges and exposes are people's corrupt dispositions and corrupt essences, He condemns their satanic dispositions and satanic natures, He condemns the various manifestations and behaviors of their rebellion and opposition to God, He condemns them for being unable to submit to God, for always opposing God, and for always having their own motivations and aims—but such condemnation does not mean that God has abandoned people with satanic dispositions. ... Hearing a single statement of condemnation from God, you think that, having been condemned by God, people have been abandoned by God, and will no longer be saved, and because of this you become negative, and abandon yourself to despair. This is misinterpreting God. In fact, God has not abandoned people. They have misinterpreted God and abandoned themselves. Nothing is more critical than when people abandon themselves, as fulfilled in the words of the Old Testament: 'Fools die for want of

wisdom’ (Proverbs 10:21). No behavior is more stupid than when people abandon themselves to despair. Sometimes you read God’s words that seem to delineate people; in fact, they are not delineating anyone, but are the expression of God’s intentions and opinions. These are words of truth and principle, they are not delineating anyone. The words uttered by God during times of anger or rage also represent God’s disposition, these words are the truth, and, moreover, belong to principle. People must understand this. God’s purpose in saying this is to allow people to understand the truth, and to understand the principles; it is absolutely not to delimit anyone. This has nothing to do with people’s ultimate destination and reward, much less are they people’s ultimate punishment. These are merely words spoken to judge and prune people, they are the result of anger at people not living up to His expectations, and they are spoken in order to wake people up, to prompt them, and they are words from God’s heart. And yet, some people fall down and forsake God because of a single statement of judgment from God. People like this don’t know what’s good for them, they are impervious to reason, they do not accept the truth at all” (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. Only by Resolving One’s Notions Can One Embark on the Right Track of Belief in God (1)). I kept reading God’s words again and again, unable to stop myself from shedding tears of self-blame. It felt as if God was comforting me face to face, especially when God said: “These are merely words spoken to judge and prune people, they are the result of anger at people not living up to His expectations, and they are spoken in order to wake people up, to prompt them, and they are words from God’s heart. And yet, some people fall down and forsake God because of a single statement of judgment from God. People like this don’t know what’s good for them, they are impervious to reason, they do not

accept the truth at all.” God’s words awakened me. Reflecting on my attitude toward God’s words, I realized that when the leader read me words of exposure and condemnation from God, I felt convicted. My heart was too resistant to accept the judgment and exposure in God’s words. At this point, I finally understood that even though God’s words are harsh, they are intended to help us know ourselves, repent, and change. The leader exposed me because the severity of my actions warranted it, but my stubborn disposition prevented me from admitting the fact. Even after being dismissed, I didn’t come to my senses, mistakenly believing that God was revealing and eliminating me. I remained trapped in a negative state, giving up on myself and succumbing to despair. The more I reflected on myself, the more remorseful I became, hating my stubbornness and rebelliousness. I realized how little I truly understood God’s work. I recalled God’s words that said: **“By what means is God’s perfection of man accomplished? It is accomplished by means of His righteous disposition. God’s disposition primarily consists of righteousness, wrath, majesty, judgment, and curse, and He perfects man primarily by means of His judgment. Some people do not understand, and ask why it is that God is only able to make man perfect through judgment and curse. They say, ‘If God were to curse man, wouldn’t man die? If God were to judge man, wouldn’t man be condemned? Then how can he still be made perfect?’ Such are the words of people who do not know the work of God. What God curses is the rebelliousness of man, and what He judges are the sins of man. Although He speaks harshly and relentlessly, He exposes all that is within man, exposing through these stern words that which is substantive within man, yet through such judgment, He gives man a profound knowledge of the substance of the flesh, and thus man submits before God. The flesh of man is of sin and**

of Satan, it is rebellious, and it is the object of God's chastisement. Thus, in order to allow man to know himself, the words of God's judgment must befall him and there must be employed every kind of refinement; only then can God's work be effective" (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. Only by Experiencing Painful Trials Can You Know the Loveliness of God). I had read this passage of God's words many times before, yet why did I still fail to understand God's intention? In the last days, God's work aims to purify and save mankind through words of judgment and chastisement. Mankind has been so deeply corrupted by Satan that without God's words of judgment and exposure, we could never truly recognize the essence and reality of our corruption, let alone achieve genuine repentance and transformation. But I fallaciously believed that when God judged and exposed us, it meant condemnation and eternal elimination, implying that we could never have a good outcome and destination. My understanding was absurd and misguided. I knew so little about God's work and His sincere intentions in saving mankind. I recalled what God had said before: **"At all times, God's intention to save man never changes"** (The Word, Vol. 2. On Knowing God. God Himself, the Unique VI). Not until today did I realize how practical those words were. God saves mankind to the fullest extent, and He will not easily give up on anyone unless they themselves choose to abandon the pursuit of truth. I couldn't help but ask myself honestly, "If God didn't want to save me, based on my actions, wouldn't I have already been eliminated by Him? If that were true, would it be necessary for Him to judge and expose me, arrange circumstances to reveal my corruption, and guide and enlighten me to reflect and understand myself? Brothers and sisters pruned me and warned me to help me turn back and reflect on myself. Weren't these actions exactly God's practical and genuine salvation? However, I didn't understand the ways in which God saves

mankind, nor did I recognize His love. Instead, I misunderstood God and lived in negativity, resisting Him. How unreasonable I was!" As I thought about this, my long-numb heart finally started to feel something, and I deeply regretted my actions. I prayed to God, "God, in the future, no matter what setbacks or failures I encounter, I don't want to misunderstand You anymore. I am willing to seriously reflect on myself, learn lessons, diligently pursue the truth, and fulfill my duties well for the rest of my life, so that I can attain true repentance."

Later, I wrote an article about my experiences during that period. A sister read it and sent me some words of God and reminded me, saying, "You should reflect on the reasons why you were pruned. Reflect on each problem the leaders exposed and use the related truths to resolve them. Only then can you truly address these issues." So I quieted down and reflected on myself: Why did the leaders say that I didn't accept the truth? What behaviors showed my refusal to accept the truth? Recalling my time as a leader, I realized that whenever I faced difficulties, I prioritized my own flesh. I avoided putting in effort or paying a price to seek the truth for solutions. I even resorted to deceitful tactics, believing that seeking the truth to solve problems would be too exhausting and nerve-racking. If I used my poor caliber as an excuse to pass the problem to the upper leaders, I could avoid the trouble. Even if the problems couldn't be solved ultimately, I wouldn't have to bear any responsibility. I remembered once when I reported work problems to my leaders, they responded, "When you encounter problems, you don't make any effort to solve them. Instead, you treat the difficulties like a burden and pass them on to others. If you had sought the truth regarding your difficulties, you would have had your own ideas on how to resolve them." Upon hearing this, instead of reflecting on myself, I became angry: What's wrong with reporting problems? How

could you say that I didn't seek the truth when facing difficulties? I argued back silently in my heart. As I thought about this, I suddenly realized that these were exactly how I didn't seek or accept the truth. I also recalled how Julia had pointed out my issues numerous times and exposed them during fellowship. Rather than reflecting on myself, I harbored resentment and sought retaliation. I dwelt on her mistakes at work, and judged and undermined her behind her, disturbing church life. When my misconduct was exposed, in order to evade responsibility, I insincerely apologized to Julia, and laid bare and knew myself in front of brothers and sisters, attempting to minimize the severity of the issue. When the leaders exposed my behavior according to God's words, I admitted them in my heart but didn't verbally acknowledge them. Yet, unreasonably, I accused the leaders of using God's words to attack and condemn me. Weren't all these actions manifestations of my refusal to accept the truth? Later, as I read more of God's words, it allowed me to gain a clearer understanding of my inner state. God's words say: **"If you wish to be cleansed of corruption and undergo a change in your life disposition, then you must have a love for the truth and the ability to accept the truth. What does it mean to accept the truth? Accepting the truth means that no matter what sort of corrupt disposition you have, or which of the great red dragon's poisons—Satan's poisons—are in your nature, when God's words expose these things, you should admit to them and submit, you can't make a different choice, and you should know yourself according to God's words. This means being able to accept God's words and accept the truth. No matter what God says, no matter how severe His utterances are, and no matter what words He uses, you can accept them as long as what He says is the truth, and you can acknowledge them as long as they conform to reality. You can submit to God's words**

regardless of how deeply you understand them, and you accept and submit to the light that is revealed by the Holy Spirit and fellowshiped by your brothers and sisters. When such a person has pursued the truth to a certain point, they can obtain the truth and achieve a transformation of their disposition. Even if people who don't love the truth have a bit of humanity, can do some good deeds, and can forsake and expend for God, they are confused about the truth and don't treat it seriously, so their life disposition never changes" (The Word, Vol. 3. The

Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. How to Know Man's Nature). From God's words, I came to understand that for someone who accepts the truth, their attitude toward God's words should be unconditional admission, acceptance, and submission. Regardless of whether God's words are harsh or gentle, whether they involve judgment and exposure or exhortation and comfort, one should always accept and submit. This is the reason that a person should have. Sometimes we may struggle to recognize the state exposed by God's words, but we should maintain an attitude of acceptance and submission. At the very least, we should believe that God's words are truth, that His exposures are factual, revealing the hidden aspects of our corrupt disposition, and we should say "Amen" to God's words. However, though I clearly knew God's words were exposing my exact state, I didn't accept it, and even unreasonably accused the leaders of using God's words to condemn me and make me negative. Not only did I fail to accept the judgment and exposure of God's words, but I also deflected responsibility onto others. I truly did not accept the truth at all. How unreasonable I was! Even when positive things like suggestions, help, and pruning from brothers and sisters came upon me, I couldn't accept them from God and submit to them. Instead, I accused those who pruned and exposed me. The more I reflected on myself, the more I realized my lack of humanity and felt deeply

ashamed. I admitted from the bottom of my heart that I was not someone who accepted the truth.

Later, I revisited the words of God that my leaders had shared with me and contemplated and pray-read them. God's words say: **"People who always play tricks in their words and actions, and who are always slippery and shirking responsibility in the performance of their duties, are those who do not accept the truth at all. They do not have the work of the Holy Spirit, which is like living in a quagmire, in darkness. No matter how they grope, no matter how hard they try, they can neither see the light nor find a direction. They perform their duties without inspiration and without God's guidance, hitting a wall in many matters, and they are unwittingly revealed while doing some things"** (The Word, Vol.

3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. Only in Performing the Duty of a Created Being Well Is There Value in Living). **"Those among brothers and sisters who are always giving vent to their negativity are lackeys of Satan, and they disturb the church. Such people must one day be expelled and eliminated"** (The Word,

Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. A Warning to Those Who Do Not Practice the Truth). Through God's words, I realized that I was indeed someone who was deceitful in their duties, slippery and shirking responsibilities. I lacked loyalty toward God. Whenever I encountered problems and difficulties, I constantly prioritized my own comfort. I was unwilling to exert effort and pay a price to seek the truth and resolve issues. Instead, I frequently passed problems to the upper leaders to avoid trouble for myself, using my poor caliber as an excuse to absolve myself from blame for not doing actual work. How selfish and deceitful I was! I habitually performed my duties perfunctorily and irresponsibly, thus I could not receive guidance and enlightenment from the Holy Spirit, nor could I discover any problems. When the leader pruned me, instead of reflecting on myself, I felt resentful

because I was embarrassed. To vent my personal spite, I judged and condemned her behind her back, which disturbed church work. Considering my evil deeds, weren't these the very behaviors God exposed as being **"lackeys of Satan,"** and **"disturbing the church"**? But why didn't I know myself at that time? Reflecting on my attitude toward God and His words, as well as all my transgressions, I felt overwhelming remorse and self-hatred. I came before God and prayed, "God, I've been so rebellious. I'm willing to repent. I don't want to misunderstand You anymore. I believe that everything You do is for the sake of cleansing and saving me!" After praying, I felt deeply touched. In my heart, I said to God, "God, from now on, I will never leave You again. The days of being far from You are too painful." From that moment on, my negative state completely changed. I actively participated in fellowship, felt motivated to do my duties, and started writing experiential testimony articles. Every day, I could truly feel my state improving. It was like a patient with a severe illness beginning to recover day by day. For nearly a year without a duty, I had lived in a state of misunderstanding and defensiveness toward God, feeling fearful and restless in my heart. Having fully experienced the agony of losing the work of the Holy Spirit, today I finally emerged from my negative state. This is all thanks to God's immense mercy and salvation. Shortly after, I received a message from the leader telling me to come back to the church to do my duties. Upon reading it, I was so touched that I couldn't find any words to say, but I kept thanking God repeatedly.

Knowing my tendency to rationalize when things happen to me, I turned to God's words and sought the truth related to my state. One day, my heart was deeply moved as I read this in God's words. God's words say: **"There is a reason why God is so profoundly wrathful toward one person or one type of person. This reason is not determined by the**

preference of God, but by that person's attitude toward the truth. When a person is averse to the truth, this is undoubtedly fatal to their attaining salvation. This is not something that can or cannot be forgiven, it is not a form of behavior, or something that is fleetingly revealed in them. It is the nature essence of a person, and God is most sickened by such people. If you occasionally reveal the corruption of being averse to the truth, you must examine, based on God's words, whether these revelations are due to your antipathy toward the truth or from a lack of understanding of the truth. This requires seeking, and it requires God's enlightenment and help. If your nature essence is such that you are averse to the truth, and you never accept the truth, and are particularly repulsed by it and hostile to it, then there is trouble. You are assuredly an evil person, and God will not save you" (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. To Fulfill One's Duty Well, Understanding the Truth Is Most Crucial). From God's words, I came to understand why God is so profoundly wrathful toward some people. It's because they are averse to the truth and reject it. God is the One who expresses the truth. Our attitude toward the truth represents our attitude toward God. Being averse to and hating the truth is tantamount to standing on the opposite side of God and becoming God's enemy. A person with a nature that is averse to the truth and hates God definitely won't accept the truth. For this type of person, no matter how much they reveal their corrupt dispositions or how much they are pruned, they never repent. No matter how many years they believe in God, their corrupt disposition never changes, and eventually, they will surely be spurned and eliminated by God. Just like Paul, whose nature was averse to and hated the truth, he never reflected on himself. As a result, after many years of working, he remained arrogant and selfish. His corrupt disposition had not changed a bit, so he was condemned and punished by

God in the end. In Paul, I saw a reflection of myself. I didn't pursue the truth, nor did I accept being pruned. What I lived out and revealed was the satanic disposition of being averse to the truth. As a result, I lived in darkness, fear, and pain for a long time, and I was put aside by God. Those consequences were all caused by my aversion to the truth. God's disposition is indeed righteous, holy, and unoffendable. If I always don't accept the truth or being pruned by God, how could I ever attain God's cleansing and salvation? If so, wouldn't my belief in God be in vain in the end? I realized that it's too dangerous to keep the disposition of being averse to the truth unsolved! Later, I intentionally focused on seeking the truth and rebelling against my own corrupt disposition. When facing pruning again, my motive to argue back and resist became weaker. No matter how much of what the brothers and sisters said to me was correct, as long as it was consistent with the facts, I would accept it. Sometimes, when I couldn't recognize my problem and wanted to argue back, I would pray to God first and be submissive. Later, I would gain some understanding and harvest by reflecting on myself.

Thinking back to how stubborn and rebellious I used to be, completely unwilling to accept the truth, and seeing how today I could gain some understanding and harvest like this, I realize that it's indeed God's salvation. Through this experience, I finally came to know myself a bit, and also gained some understanding about the ways in which God saves mankind as well as God's intention. I have truly realized that God's chastening, discipline, and pruning are indeed for cleansing and saving people, not for condemning or eliminating them.

7. God's Words Are Our Only Lens for Viewing Others

By Katrina, USA

I had known Sheila for over 3 years, and I knew her well. Whenever we met up, she would chat with me about her current state. She'd say she was always suspicious of others and cared a lot about what others thought of her. She also said she would be very petty, and was always speculating what people meant. She could get upset about the slightest look on someone's face, their tone, or even some offhand remark. She didn't want to be that way, but she couldn't help it. She'd often say that she was deeply corrupted, deceitful and lacking in humanity, that she hated how much she prized reputation and status, and would cry as she talked. Seeing how regretful and disgusted she was with herself, I thought that she really wanted to change. Perhaps this corrupt disposition was a little more serious and was her Achilles's heel, so change wouldn't come easy, and would take time. So I thought I should be considerate of her. No matter how busy I was with my duty, if she wanted to chat, I would put aside my work and listen to her pour out her heart, and would often encourage, console and fellowship with her. But what I couldn't understand was why even though Sheila seemed to speak clearly and logically in her fellowship and knew herself well, when others pointed out her problems, she'd think they held her in contempt and become negative. This happened time and again and never changed. What's more, she had spoken with many people about this state, had opened up many times and many people had fellowshiped with her. But after several years, she still hasn't shown the slightest sign of improvement.

I remember one time, a supervisor was going over an issue we'd had with watering newcomers, saying we hadn't been caring and patient enough with the newcomers, and didn't fellowship and support them right away when they didn't attend gatherings, which was irresponsible. The supervisor was saying this to all the waterers, and wasn't singling out anyone in particular. But Sheila said that the supervisor was exposing her and making her lose face, so she didn't want to speak during the gathering. Another time, a brother was fellowshiping about his current state, and said that sometimes when he met brothers and sisters with a slightly poor caliber he couldn't treat them fairly. He went on to fellowship on his experience and how he changed and gained entry. But when Sheila heard this, she thought he was talking about her, and that the brother was disparaging her caliber and looking down on her. She was negative for many days after that, developed a bias against the brother, and shunned and ignored him. Another time, while discussing work, the supervisor pointed out a small issue with how Sheila watered newcomers, and she suddenly began crying and ran out, not returning until quite a while later. She sat silently to the side, tears streaming down her face, as if she had been deeply wronged. When I saw the expression on her face, I couldn't quiet my heart and the gathering was disturbed. Ultimately, the supervisor had no choice but to comfort and encourage her, after which she finally settled down. Later on, the leader fellowshiped with her, pointing out that she prized reputation and status too much, and had to be at the center of everyone's care and attention to do her duty. She was even less accepting of this: On one hand, she said the supervisor's criticism was biased and unfair, while also saying that she had a difficult nature, and wanted to change but was unable to do so. She also said, "There's no saving me. How did I have this kind of nature? Why is everyone else better than me and blessed with less complicated thoughts?"

Why didn't God give me a good nature?" When I heard her say all this, I thought, "How willfully troublesome and unreasonable of her! How can she blame God?" But then I thought that maybe she'd been in a bad state recently, and only said these things because her reputation and status had been threatened. Perhaps when her state improved she would quit being like that.

Afterward, I realized that no matter who she was with, Sheila cared much about their expressions—if she thought someone was being cold to her or if she didn't like their tone or attitude, she would conclude that that person had it out for her. In my own interactions with her, I would be extremely careful, always worried that I'd somehow offend her with my words, make her become negative and delay her duty. It was suffocating trying to interact with Sheila and I often wanted to avoid her. But then I thought that I was corrupted too, and shouldn't always be looking critically at her. I had to be caring and considerate of her struggles, and be tolerant and compassionate toward her. So I forced myself to interact normally with her and tried my best not to hurt her pride.

Later on, because Sheila didn't accept the truth at all, was being unreasonable, and wasn't playing a positive role in the church, the leader dismissed her and arranged for her to be isolated to reflect. I was quite surprised when I heard the news, because even though Sheila was too concerned with reputation and status and was often suspicious of others, she was still quite willing to open up and fellowship, and seemed to be seeking the truth. So why was she arranged for isolation and reflection? It was only later on during a gathering, when the leaders read out the brothers' and sisters' evaluations of Sheila and used God's words to dissect her behavior, that I gained some discernment of her. Almighty God says: **"People who are unreasonable and willfully troublesome think only of their own**

interests when they act, doing whatever pleases them. Their words are nothing but preposterous heresies, and they are impervious to reason. Their vicious dispositions are overflowing. No one dares associate with them, and no one is willing to fellowship about the truth with them, for fear of inviting disaster upon themselves. Other people are on tenterhooks whenever they speak their minds to them, afraid that if they say one word that is not to their liking or not in line with their wishes, they will seize upon it and make outrageous accusations. Are such people not evil? Are they not living demons? All those with vicious dispositions and unsound reason are living demons. And when someone interacts with a living demon, they may bring disaster upon themselves with just a moment's carelessness. Would it not spell big trouble if such living demons were present in the church? (It would.) After these living demons have thrown their tantrums and vented about their anger, they may speak like a human for a while and apologize, but they will not change afterward. Who knows when their mood will sour and they will throw another tantrum, spouting their preposterous arguments. The target of their tantrum and venting is different each time; as is the source and background of their venting. That is, anything can set them off, anything can make them feel dissatisfied, and anything can make them react in a hysterical and unreasonable way. How terrible, how troublesome! These deranged evil people might lose their minds at any time; no one knows what they are capable of doing. I have the greatest hatred for such people. Every one of them should be cleansed away—they must all be cleared out. I do not wish to engage with them. They are muddled in thought and brutish in disposition, they are filled with preposterous arguments and devilish words, and when things befall them, they vent about them in an impetuous way. ... Despite being

obviously aware of their own numerous issues, they never seek the truth to resolve them, nor do they discuss knowing themselves in their fellowship with others. When their own problems are mentioned, they deflect and shift the blame, pushing all problems and responsibilities onto others, and even complain that the reason for their behavior is because others mistreat them. It's as if their tantrums and senseless provocations are caused by others, as if it's everyone else who's at fault, and they merely have no other choice but to act this way—they believe they're legitimately defending themselves. Whenever they are dissatisfied, they start venting their resentment and spouting nonsense, insisting on their preposterous arguments as if everyone else is wrong, portraying others as villains and themselves as the sole good person. No matter how much they throw tantrums or spout preposterous arguments, they demand to be spoken well of. Even when they do wrong, they forbid others from exposing or criticizing them. If you point out even a slight issue of theirs, they'll entangle you in endless disputes, and you can forget about living peaceably then. What kind of person is this? This is someone who is unreasonable and willfully troublesome, and those who do so are considered evil people” (The Word,

Vol. 5. The Responsibilities of Leaders and Workers. The Responsibilities of Leaders and Workers (26)). God's words expose the behaviors of people who are unreasonable and vexatious. As soon as someone says or does something that threatens their interests, they speak unreasonably and make a scene. They reveal vicious dispositions, so that others become afraid to offend and confront them. They seriously disturb the brothers and sisters and church life. Sheila was like that all along. When others pointed out her issues, she wouldn't consider whether what they said was true and didn't reflect, instead focusing on their tone and attitude. If they weren't to her liking, she'd lose

it and either resent them and form a poor opinion of them, thinking they had it out for her and looked down on her, or would let out her discontent by crying. This constrained other people, who always had to either avoid or accommodate her. Our supervisor went over the problems in our watering work to help us improve and do our duties better, but Sheila thought the supervisor was singling her out and bringing up her past mistakes, so she formed a poor opinion of the supervisor. When a brother fellowshiped on his state, saying that he was unable to treat people fairly, she thought he was disparaging and looking down on her, so she ignored him. When the supervisor pointed out the problems in her duty, she started bawling in order to vent her grievances. So people didn't dare confront or offend her, and could only speak to her in a delicate way, appeasing her and going along with her. Only then would she do her duty. Sheila had been acting like that for years. She would form a poor opinion of whoever harmed her reputation or threatened her interests. She would even say she was negative because of how other people had a bad attitude toward her, which was a completely unreasonable inversion of the truth. Wasn't she just one of those unreasonable people God exposed? Only after realizing this did I see that being suspicious of others and being too concerned with reputation were not Sheila's only problems; she didn't accept the truth at all and was a vexatious and unreasonable person. Then I reflected on how when I saw that Sheila would often discuss her state, open up and fellowship about her corruption, dissect herself in gatherings and would even break down in tears and show remorse when discussing her corruption, I thought she must have real knowledge of herself and was a pursuer of the truth. What was wrong with my understanding?

Later on, after fellowshiping on God's words with my brothers and sisters, I finally gained some discernment of her so-called "self-

knowledge.” God says: “When some people fellowship their self-knowledge, the first thing out of their mouths is, ‘I’m a devil, a living Satan, someone who resists God. I rebel against Him and betray Him; I’m a viper, an evil person who should be cursed.’ Is this true self-knowledge? They only speak in generalities. Why do they not offer examples? Why do they not bring the shameful things they did out into the light of day for dissection? Some undiscerning people hear them and think, ‘Now, that is true self-knowledge! To know themselves as a devil, and even to curse themselves—what heights they’ve reached!’ Many people, new believers in particular, are prone to be misled by this talk. They think that the speaker is pure and has spiritual understanding, that this is someone who loves the truth, and is qualified for leadership. However, once they interact with them for a while, they find that this is not so, that the person is not whom they imagined, but is exceptionally false and deceitful, skilled at disguise and pretension, which comes as a great disappointment. On what basis can people be deemed to truly know themselves? You cannot just consider what they say—the key is to determine whether they are able to practice and accept the truth. For those that truly understand the truth, they not only have true knowledge of themselves, most importantly, they are able to practice the truth. They not only speak about their true understanding, but are also able to truly do what they say. That is, their words and actions are completely aligned. If what they say sounds coherent and agreeable, but they don’t do it, don’t live it out, then in this they have become Pharisees, they are hypocrites, and absolutely not people who truly know themselves. Many people sound very coherent when they fellowship the truth, but don’t realize when they have revelations of a corrupt disposition. Are these people who

know themselves? If people do not know themselves, are they people who understand the truth? All who do not know themselves are people who do not understand the truth, and all who speak empty words of self-knowledge have false spirituality, they are liars. Some people sound very coherent when they speak words and doctrines, but the state in their spirits is numb and dull-witted, they are unperceptive, and they are unresponsive to any issues. It may be said that they are numb, but sometimes, listening to them speak, their spirits seem quite sharp. For example, right after an incident, they are able to know themselves straight away: ‘Just now an idea was made apparent in me. I thought about it and realized that it was deceitful, that I was deceiving God.’ Some undiscerning people are envious when they hear this, saying: ‘This person immediately realizes when they have a revelation of corruption, and is able to open up and fellowship about it, too. They are so quick to react, their spirit is sharp, they’re much better than us. This is truly someone who pursues the truth.’ Is this an accurate way of measuring people? (No.) So what should be the basis for evaluating whether people really know themselves? It must not only be what comes out of their mouths. You must also look at what is really manifested in them. The simplest method is to look at whether they are able to practice the truth—this is what’s most crucial. Their ability to practice the truth proves that they truly know themselves, because those who truly know themselves manifest repentance, and only when people manifest repentance do they truly know themselves” (The Word, Vol.

3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. Only Self-Knowledge Is of Aid in Pursuing the Truth). Through reading God’s words, I learned that those who truly know themselves can accept the truth, feel ashamed after revealing corruption, and truly repent and transform afterward. Others, by contrast, say all the

right words, calling themselves demons and Satans, as if they have deep self-knowledge, but when faced with pruning, they don't accept it at all and don't reflect, and will even repeatedly defend themselves and make specious arguments. No matter how much self-knowledge such people appear to have, it is all a ruse. I thought of how Sheila always chatted with people about her state, saying that she was too concerned with face and constrained by people's tones and attitudes. She also said she was deceitful and suspicious of others. On the surface, it seemed like she was quite straightforward and candid, was able to spot her own corruption and reflect on herself, even sometimes crying as she spoke. It seemed like she was truly remorseful and despised herself. So I thought that she was a pursuer of the truth. But she had been talking about these behaviors for years and yet she never seemed to change. Only through the revelation of God's words did I see that Sheila's so-called self-knowledge was just an act; she didn't really accept the truth or reflect on her corruption. She would often apply various profound-sounding, but empty statements to herself, saying she had poor humanity, was deceitful, malicious, an antichrist and should be sent to hell. It seemed like she had deep self-knowledge, but when others pointed out her issues or pruned her, she wasn't accepting in the slightest, and was even resistant and resentful. She would even break down in tears, become vexatious and unreasonable, and argue over right and wrong, disturbing others to the point where they couldn't gather and do their duty normally. She severely disturbed church life and the church's work. In the past, I didn't understand the truth and lacked discernment, so I was misled by her outward behavior, and even thought that she was a pursuer of the truth. How muddled and foolish I was! Only later did I realize that Sheila wasn't talking about her state with others because she wanted to seek the truth in order to resolve her problems and rectify her state, but because she wanted

someone to vent her grievances to, someone to comfort her and help alleviate her suffering. When she opened up about her state to someone, she was just a disturbance. If she hadn't been dismissed and her behavior dissected, I wouldn't have gained discernment of her. I would have treated her as a sister with tolerance and patience, and may even have been unwittingly misled and deceived by her. It was then that I realized how important it is to view people by God's words!

Later on, I read a passage of God's words that gave me some discernment of Sheila's motives and the tactics she used to mislead people. Almighty God says: **"How can one distinguish whether a person loves the truth? In one regard, one must look at whether this person can come to know themselves based on God's word, at whether they can reflect on themselves and feel true remorse; in another regard, one must look at whether they can accept and practice the truth. If they can accept and practice the truth, they are someone who loves the truth and who can submit to God's work. If they only recognize the truth, but never accept or practice it, as some people say, 'I understand all of the truth, but I can't practice it,' this proves they are not someone who loves the truth. Some people admit that God's word is the truth and that they have corrupt dispositions, and also say that they are willing to repent and remake themselves anew, but after that, there is no change at all. Their words and actions are still the same as before. When they talk about knowing themselves, it is as if they are telling a joke or shouting a slogan. They do not reflect or come to know themselves in the depths of their hearts at all; the key issue is that they have no attitude of remorse. Less still are they opening up about their corruption candidly in order to genuinely self-reflect. Rather, they are pretending to know themselves by going through the process and the**

motions of doing so. They are not people who genuinely know themselves or accept the truth. When such people talk about knowing themselves, they are going through the motions; they are engaging in disguise and fraud, and false spirituality. Some people are deceitful, and when they see others fellowshipping their self-knowledge, they think, ‘Everyone else opens up and dissects their own deceit. If I don’t say anything, everyone will think I don’t know myself. I’ll have to go through the motions, then!’ After which, they describe their own deceit as gravely serious, illustrating it in dramatic fashion, and their self-knowledge seems especially profound. Everyone who hears feels they truly know themselves, and thereupon looks upon them with envy, which in turn makes them feel as if they are glorious, as if they’ve just adorned themselves with a halo. This manner of self-knowledge achieved by going through the motions, coupled with their disguise and fraud, misleads others. Can their conscience be at ease when they do this? Isn’t this just blatant deceit? If people only speak emptily about knowing themselves, no matter how lofty or good that knowledge might be, and afterward they still continue to reveal a corrupt disposition, just as they did before, without any change at all, then that is not genuine self-knowledge. If people can deliberately pretend and deceive in this way, it proves that they do not accept the truth at all, and are just like the nonbelievers. By talking about their self-knowledge in this way, they are only following the trend and saying whatever suits everyone’s tastes. Isn’t their knowledge and dissection of themselves deceptive? Is this genuine self-knowledge? It absolutely is not. This is because they are not opening up and dissecting themselves from the heart, and they are only talking a bit about knowing themselves in a false, deceptive way for the sake of going through the motions. Even

more serious is that to make others admire and envy them, they deliberately exaggerate to make their problems seem more serious when discussing self-knowledge, mixing in their personal intentions and goals. When they do this, they do not feel indebted, their conscience is not reproached after they disguise themselves and engage in fraud, they feel nothing after rebelling against and deceiving God, and they do not pray to God to admit their mistake. Aren't people like this intransigent? If they don't feel indebted, can they ever feel remorse? Can someone without true remorse rebel against the flesh and practice the truth? Can someone without true remorse truly repent? Certainly not. If they are not even remorseful, is it not absurd to talk about self-knowledge? Isn't this just disguise and fraud?" (The Word, Vol. 3. The

Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. Only Self-Knowledge Is of Aid in Pursuing the Truth). Reading God's words, I thought of Sheila's behavior. She was fond of talking about her state with others and would use God's words to reflect upon and know herself in gatherings. She would describe herself in the gravest of terms. Outwardly, she seemed to have deep self-knowledge and to be extremely remorseful and hateful of herself, but this was all just an act she put on for others to deceive them into thinking she accepted the truth and had knowledge of herself. This so-called self-knowledge was her way of misleading and hoodwinking others, making them think she was courageously laying herself bare, so that they wouldn't just fail to discern her, but would also have great admiration for her. Also, each time Sheila revealed corruption, she would invoke God's exposure of antichrists to describe herself, saying that she sought reputation and status, was walking the path of an antichrist, that desire for status had taken over her life and if she didn't repent, this desire would kill her. But as soon as a situation threatened her reputation and status, she'd go back to her old ways, and

despite fellowshiping on her state for years, she hadn't achieved any transformation. The leaders had pointed out her issues and fellowshiped with her many times, but she wouldn't accept them. She would even become resistant, debate ceaselessly and make specious arguments. It was clear that no matter how negatively she appeared to view herself, or how remorseful or tearful she appeared, it was all an act to deceive people, and that her aim was only to protect her status and image. Also, when she saw how others were able to put their egos aside and seek the truth, she didn't learn from their strengths, instead thinking that they were just born with a good nature, and that she couldn't practice the truth and was always suspicious of people because God hadn't bestowed her with a good nature. She didn't despise her satanic disposition, and blamed God instead, feeling reproachful toward Him and saying He wasn't righteous. This showed that Sheila's essence was that of a demon, and was incredibly absurd and unreasonable. If not for the exposure of God's words, I would have treated her like a pursuer of the truth.

During a gathering, I saw this passage of God's words: **“Only those who love the truth belong to God's house; only they are real brothers and sisters. Do you think that all those who often attend assembly in God's house are brothers and sisters? Not necessarily. What people are not brothers and sisters? (Those who are averse to the truth, who do not accept the truth.) Those who do not accept the truth and are averse to it are all evil people. They are all people without a conscience or reason. None of them are those whom God saves. These people are devoid of humanity, they do not attend to their proper work, and they run amok doing bad things. They live by satanic philosophies and employ crafty maneuvers and use, wheedle, and cheat others. They do not accept the slightest bit of the truth, and they have infiltrated God's house solely to**

gain blessings. Why do we call them disbelievers? Because they are averse to the truth, and they do not accept it. As soon as the truth is fellowshipped, they lose interest, they are averse to it, they cannot stand to hear about it, they feel it is boring and cannot stay seated. They are clearly disbelievers and nonbelievers. You must not regard them as brothers and sisters. ... If they are not interested in the truth, how can they practice the truth? So what do they live by? Without question, they live by the philosophies of Satan, they are always being wily and cunning, they do not have a life of normal humanity. They never pray to God or seek the truth, but handle everything using human tricks, tactics, and philosophies for worldly dealings—which makes for an exhausting and painful existence. ... Those who do not love the truth do not really believe in God. Those who cannot at all accept the truth cannot be called brothers and sisters. Only those who love and are able to accept the truth are brothers and sisters. Now, who are those who do not love the truth? They are all nonbelievers. Those who do not at all accept the truth are averse to and reject the truth. More precisely, they are all nonbelievers who have infiltrated the church. If they are able to do all kinds of evil and disturb and disrupt the church's work, they are the minions of Satan. They should be cleared out and eliminated. They absolutely cannot be treated as brothers and sisters. All who show them love are extremely foolish and ignorant” (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. Part Three). Through God's words, I realized that true brothers and sisters are those who love the truth and can accept the truth. They truly expend themselves for God and have testimonies of practicing the truth. Perhaps they can't speak of any profound self-knowledge, but they love the truth and practice as many of God's words as they can understand. Even though they may commit transgressions, reveal corruption

and become negative sometimes, because they pursue the truth, when pruned or when faced with setbacks and failures, they can accept it from God, seek the truth and reflect on themselves. When they recognize their problems, they can slowly rectify them and improve. Only such people are true brothers and sisters. As for those that don't accept and are averse to the truth, they cannot be called brothers and sisters. If they have poor humanity and do all kinds of evil that disrupt and disturb the church's work, they are evil people and antichrists and even less qualified to be called a brother or sister. Even if they remain in the church, they are only false believers who've infiltrated God's house. No matter how long they believe, they will ultimately be revealed and eliminated by God. Outwardly, Sheila didn't seem to have done any great evil, but everything she did disturbed people's thoughts and impeded them in their duties, and she'd been doing this all along. No matter how others fellowshiped with and supported her, she never made the slightest change, and even debated, argued and acted unreasonably. This showed that Sheila didn't accept the truth at all and was averse to the truth by nature. She is of the devil's ilk and not one of our sisters. In the past, I didn't understand this aspect of the truth and lacked discernment. I thought that as long as one believed in God and recognized His name, they were a brother or sister. I would treat them as a brother or sister, and blindly sympathize with and tolerate them, foolishly showing them kindness and support without discernment. As a result, many of my efforts were in vain. How foolish and muddled I was! Now that Sheila has been dismissed and isolated, I've seen how righteous God is. Those that don't seek the truth and act unreasonably can't gain a footing in the church, and will ultimately be exposed by God. I also came to understand God's good intentions: God has arranged situations to let me learn lessons. I have to start seizing them. Going forward, I must put more time and energy into

the truth, and view people and things and conduct myself and do things through the lens of God's words.

8. Reflections on Pursuing Good Luck

By Su Min, China

At the end of 2022, I began my duty as a preacher and became responsible for following up on the work of several churches. One day, I received a letter from the upper-level leader, saying that the states of the two leaders in one church were poor and that it had already affected the various items of church work. She asked me to quickly go there to understand the situation and resolve it through fellowship. I thought to myself, “Recently, this church experienced a campaign of arrests by the Communist Party, many brothers and sisters are facing security risks and cannot do their duties normally. It’s understandable that the two leaders are a bit negative due to this difficulty. If I just find some of God’s words and fellowship with them, I should be able to resolve this problem.” When I saw the two leaders, their states were terrible. They said that the lack of results in the church’s various items of work was caused by their failure to perform actual work, and they were so negative that they wanted to resign. I immediately fellowshiped with them, saying, “This environment is allowed by God. We cannot be stuck in a state of negativity. The most crucial thing now is how we can work together to shoulder our duties and not delay the church’s work.” But no matter how I fellowshiped, the two sisters remained trapped in their negative states, saying that their calibers were poor, that they didn’t pursue the truth, and that they couldn’t do leadership work. Faced with such a situation, I thought, “Why am I so unlucky? I just started being a preacher, and I’m assigned to this church where the leaders are too negative to take responsibility. Doesn’t this mean all the work will fall on my shoulders?” At that time, I was simultaneously fellowshiping with the church leaders to resolve their states and going to

various gatherings to implement some work. I was busy to the point of exhaustion every day. Later, one of the leaders ended up resigning. The other leader was betrayed by a Judas and had to temporarily hide to avoid being arrested, so she was unable to go out to do her duty. Hearing this news, I couldn't help but sigh deeply, thinking, "There are so many issues in this church; the two leaders can't even do their duties. All the work falls on me alone. How long will I be busy with all this?" During those days, I was like a spinning top, unable to stop moving. Sometimes, I met with brothers and sisters during the day to get an understanding of the work, and when I returned at night, there would be a pile of letters to reply to. I stayed busy until it got late every night and still couldn't complete all the tasks. Facing this series of problems and difficulties, I was burnt out, feeling mentally and physically drained. It felt like a stone was lodged in my chest, making it hard to breathe. I thought, "Ever since being assigned to this church, I've encountered a series of unfavorable events. New problems arise before the old ones are resolved. Now there's not even a church leader. I'm like a lone commander, with no one to consult on things, having to handle all the work myself. Meanwhile, the other preacher is responsible for churches with three leaders. Although there are many tasks, each person does a bit, so he's not as exhausted as I am. Why does he have such good luck? And why was I assigned to a church like this? I'm so unlucky!" The more I thought about it, the more aggrieved I felt, always feeling that I was unlucky to be assigned to that church. Although I appeared to be doing my duty normally every day, I felt dispirited and even wanted to escape this environment.

While living in this incorrect state of despondency and resistance, one day, I watched a testimony video with a passage of God's words that touched me deeply. Almighty God says: **"What is the problem with**

people who always think that they are unlucky? They always use the standard of luck to measure whether their actions are right or wrong, and to weigh up which path they should take, the things that they should experience, and any problems that they face. Is that right or wrong? (Wrong.) They describe bad things as unlucky and good things as lucky or advantageous. Is this perspective right or wrong? (Wrong.) Measuring things from this kind of perspective is wrong. It is an extreme and incorrect method and standard for measuring things. This kind of method often leads people to sink into depression, and it often makes them feel uneasy, and that nothing ever goes their way, and that they never get what they want, which eventually leads them to feel constantly anxious, irritable, and uneasy. When these negative emotions go unresolved, these people constantly sink into depression and feel that God does not favor them. They think that God treats others with grace but not them, and that God takes care of others but not them. 'Why do I always feel uneasy and anxious? Why do bad things always happen to me? Why do good things never come my way? Just once is all I'm asking for!' When you view things with this kind of erroneous way of thinking and perspective, you will fall into the trap of good and bad luck. When you are continually falling into this trap, you will constantly feel depressed. In the midst of this depression, you will be particularly sensitive to whether the things that befall you are lucky or unlucky. When this happens, it proves that this perspective and idea of good and bad luck has taken control of you. When you are controlled by this kind of perspective, your views and attitude toward people, events, and things are no longer within the range of the conscience and reason of normal humanity, but have fallen into a sort of extreme. When you fall into this extreme, you will not emerge from your

depression. You will keep getting depressed time and time again, and even if you do not normally feel depressed, as soon as something goes wrong, as soon as you feel that something unlucky has happened, you will immediately sink into depression. This depression will affect your normal judgment and decision-making, and even your happiness, anger, sorrow, and joy. When it affects your happiness, anger, sorrow, and joy, it will disturb and destroy the performance of your duty, as well as your will and desire to follow God. When these positive things are destroyed, the few truths you have come to understand will vanish into thin air and be of no help to you at all” (The Word, Vol. 6. On the Pursuit of the Truth I. How to Pursue the Truth (2)).

God’s words exposed my exact state. In my view, doing my duty smoothly without any difficulties and having everything go well was good luck. When I encountered some difficulties or problems in my duty, I felt I was unfortunate and unlucky, and I immediately fell into a despondent mood. For instance, when I came to this church and saw that both leaders were so negative that they wanted to resign and that there were a series of difficulties and problems in the church’s work, I didn’t accept it from God and seek His intention or think about how to put all my energy into shouldering the work. Instead, I fell into despondency, thinking it was bad luck for me to encounter these difficulties. In particular, when neither leader could do the work later on, and when I thought about the area the other preacher was supervising where the leaders and workers were all in place and the work progressed smoothly, I particularly envied him and thought he was lucky, whereas I was unlucky and encountered all the bad things. When I looked at things from this wrong perspective, I kept sinking into despondency and resistance, having no energy in my duty and even wanting to escape from this environment. But in reality, all the environments I face are laid out by God. God’s intention is

for me to seek the truth, rely on God, and experience this environment in a practical way. Even when there are difficulties, I should still pray to God and seek the truth to resolve them, shouldering the duties I can handle. But I hadn't thought about how to experience God's work and understand His sovereignty and orchestrations in such an environment. When faced with unsatisfactory things, I thought I was unfortunate and had bad luck, living in a despondent mood and resisting God's sovereignty. How could I learn lessons this way? How could I understand God's deeds? I couldn't help but think of those who don't believe in God. They never accept things from God, don't submit to God's sovereignty and arrangements, and blame everyone but themselves when things aren't to their liking. They live their whole lives without knowing God. As for me, even though I believed in God and said that God holds sovereignty over everything, I still judged everything according to the viewpoints of nonbelievers. Isn't this the behavior of a veritable disbeliever?

I read more of God's words that say: **“These people who are always concerned about whether they have good or bad luck—is the way that they view things correct? Does good luck or bad luck exist? (No.) What is the basis for saying that it does not exist? (The people we meet and the things that happen to us every day are determined by God's sovereignty and arrangements. There is no such thing as good luck or bad luck; everything happens out of necessity and has meaning behind it.) Is that correct? (It is.) This view is correct, and this is the theoretical basis for saying that luck does not exist. Whatever happens to you, whether good or bad, it is all normal, just like the weather through the four seasons—not every day can be sunny. You cannot say that sunny days are arranged by God, whereas cloudy days, rain, wind, and storms are not. Everything is determined by God's sovereignty and arrangements, and is**

generated by the natural environment. This natural environment arises according to the laws and rules that God arranged and established. All of this is necessary and imperative, so no matter what the weather, it is generated and brought about by natural laws. There is nothing good or bad in it—only people’s feelings about it are good or bad. ... The fact is that whether a person feels good or bad about something is based on their own selfish motives, desires, and self-interest, rather than on the essence of the thing itself. So, the basis on which people gauge whether something is good or bad is inaccurate. Because the basis is inaccurate, the final conclusions that they draw are also inaccurate. Returning to the subject of good luck and bad luck, now everyone knows that this saying of luck does not hold water, and that it is neither good nor bad. The people, events, and things that you encounter, whether good or bad, are all determined by God’s sovereignty and arrangements, so you should face them properly. Accept what is good from God, and accept what is bad from God as well. Do not say that you’re lucky when good things happen, and that you’re unlucky when bad things happen. It can only be said that there are lessons for people to learn within all these things, and they should not reject or avoid them. Thank God for the good things, but also thank God for the bad things, because all of them are arranged by Him. Good people, events, things, and environments provide lessons that they should learn, but there is even more to be learned from bad people, events, things, and environments. These are all experiences and episodes that should be part of one’s life. People should not use the idea of luck to measure them” (The Word, Vol. 6. On the Pursuit of the Truth I. How to Pursue the Truth (2)). “If you give up on the idea of how lucky or unlucky you are, and treat these things calmly and correctly, you will find that most things are not so unfavorable or difficult to deal

with. When you let go of your ambitions and desires, when you stop rejecting or avoiding whatever misfortune befalls you, and you stop measuring such things by how lucky or unlucky you are, many of the things that you used to see as unfortunate and bad, you will now think of as good—the bad things will turn into good things. Your mentality and the way that you view things will change, which will enable you to feel differently about your life experiences, and at the same time reap different rewards. This is an extraordinary experience, one which will bring you unimagined rewards. It is a good thing, not a bad thing” (The

Word, Vol. 6. On the Pursuit of the Truth I. How to Pursue the Truth (2)). God’s words enlightened me. Actually, there is no such thing as good or bad luck. Everything that happens to me, regardless of whether it’s in line with my notions on the surface, is orchestrated by God and is bound to happen, and is also a necessary experience in my life. God arranges these things to teach me lessons. As long as I focus on seeking the truth, I will gain something; what seems bad to people can turn into something good. For example, when Job faced Satan’s temptations, he lost his great wealth, his children were crushed to death, and he himself was covered in boils. From a human perspective, the series of events that Job encountered seemed very unfortunate and unlucky. However, from God’s perspective, He allowed Job to face these temptations to give him a chance to testify to God, proving to Satan that Job was a righteous man who feared God and shunned evil, which prevented Satan from accusing or attacking him further. Job, with his faith in and fear of God, stood firm in his testimony during these trials and gained God’s approval. This was such a meaningful thing! Through Job’s experience, we can see that there is no such thing as good or bad luck, and that everything that happens is due to God’s sovereignty and orchestrations, designed to teach us different lessons amidst various environments.

However, I didn't recognize God's sovereignty and always measured everything that happened to me based on luck. This was because I was too considerate of my flesh, always wanting to do my duties smoothly without having my flesh suffer. As long as it benefited my flesh and I didn't have to suffer, I felt that I was lucky. Conversely, if I encountered some difficulties and problems and needed to suffer and pay a price, I felt that I was unlucky and often complained in my heart. My view on judging things was too distorted! The series of difficulties and problems that I now faced were seemingly unfavorable on the surface, but God had used these difficulties to teach me to rely on Him, seek the truth, rebel against my flesh, and learn some lessons. In the past, when I was doing my duty in a comfortable environment and just following the same routine every day, it seemed easy on the surface, but I gained very little. I didn't understand many truth principles, and my life growth was slow, whereas now, this current environment was beneficial to my life. Understanding God's intention, I felt much more relieved, no longer dwelling in despondency and resistance. I was willing to submit to the environment God had laid out for me and experience God's work in a practical way. Afterward, I started to do my duty earnestly, implementing the work according to the requirements of God's house. After a period of time, some of the church's work began to recover gradually. I became more familiar with the personnel and the various items of work, and I understood the principles of work better than before, gaining some confidence. Only then did I experience firsthand God's thoughtfulness in laying out these environments. I saw that by not judging the surrounding people, events, and things from the perspective of good or bad luck and accepting everything from God and seeking the truth, I didn't feel tired in my duty. Instead, I felt fulfilled and at peace.

After one gathering, the leader arranged for me to handle something at a church. I originally planned to finish it in one day and then proceed to another church to implement work, but unexpectedly, as soon as I arrived at this church, the church supervisor nervously told me, “Something happened. Many brothers and sisters were arrested yesterday.” After hearing his account, I realized that those arrested were almost all leaders and workers, meaning that now it would be nearly impossible to carry out any church work normally. The church leaders also had to hide themselves due to their contact with those people and couldn’t go out to do their duties. Right after that, I received a letter from the upper-level leader instructing me to stay at this church temporarily to handle the aftermath of the arrests. At first, I was able to accept this from God and submit. At that time, there were many security risks for various host families and brothers and sisters, and many church tasks needed to be handled. I was busy all day, and when I returned to my host home at night, I had to respond to letters from other churches. I needed to stay up late nearly every night. The environment was also harsh, and almost every day, I received letters saying that more brothers and sisters had been arrested. Every time I went out, my heart was in my throat, not knowing if I would return safely this time. Some time passed, and I felt physically and mentally exhausted. Seeing that two leaders around me were just responding to letters and doing some work at home, whereas I was always running about, moving around constantly like a spinning top with more things to do than I had time for, and my nerves were stretched tight, I thought to myself, “The duties they do are so easy. They don’t have to worry or run around. Unlike me, I don’t even get any chances to rest. Why do I always get caught up dealing with church arrests? I’m so unlucky! Why do these things keep happening to me one after the other?” Although I didn’t dare to complain openly, deep down, I was very

resistant, and I was always resigned and unwilling when doing my duty. While I was dwelling in this wrong state, I couldn't help but think back to my previous experiences, and I was vaguely aware that this environment was laid out for me by God so that I could learn a lesson. I prayed to God, "Oh God, when things happen to me, I still involuntarily view them from the perspective of good or bad luck and still feel it's because of my bad luck and misfortune that they happen. I can't truly understand Your intention. Oh God, please enlighten and guide me so that I can learn to experience amidst this environment."

Afterward, I consciously searched for God's words to read, wanting to understand what exactly was wrong with always pursuing good luck. I read this passage in God's words: **"What are the thoughts and perspectives of people who use luck to measure whether things are good or bad? What is the essence of such people? Why do they pay so much attention to good luck and bad luck? Do people who focus a lot on luck hope that their luck is good, or do they hope that it is bad? (They hope that it is good.) That is right. In fact, they pursue good luck and for good things to happen to them, and they just take advantage of them and profit from them. They do not care how much others suffer, or how many hardships or difficulties others have to endure. They do not want anything that they perceive as unlucky to happen to them. In other words, they do not want any bad things to happen to them: no setbacks, no failures or embarrassments, no being pruned, no losing things, no losing out, and no being deceived. If any of that happens, they regard it as bad luck. No matter who arranges it, if bad things happen, it is unlucky. They hope that all good things—from being promoted, standing out from the crowd, and benefiting at others' expense, to profiting from something, making lots of money, or becoming a high-**

ranking official—happen to them, and they think that is good luck. They always measure the people, events, and things that they encounter based on luck. They are pursuing good luck, not bad luck. As soon as the slightest thing goes wrong, they get angry, annoyed, and dissatisfied. To put it bluntly, these types of people are selfish. They pursue benefiting themselves at other people’s expense, making a profit for themselves, coming out on top, and standing out from the crowd. They would be satisfied if every good thing happened to them alone. This is their nature essence; it is their true face” (The Word, Vol. 6. On the Pursuit of the Truth I. How to Pursue the Truth (2)).

God’s words made me feel very ashamed. It turned out that my constant pursuit of good luck and avoidance of any difficulties or adversity was actually due to my selfish nature. I adhered to a philosophy of worldly dealings of “Never take the short end of the stick,” always putting my own interests first. I always wanted all the good things to happen to me, for everything to go smoothly without having to endure any hardship; that’s what would make me happy. Once I encountered setbacks or difficulties that touched upon my fleshly interests and required me to suffer, I started to complain and get irritated, losing my balance completely. Before believing in God, when I saw colleagues who came from good backgrounds, with family members who had stable jobs and nice houses, while I lived in poverty without even a house of my own and with family members at home unemployed and needing me to support them, I felt very unbalanced. I thought it was my bad luck to have such a family, and I was especially envious and jealous of my colleagues. I always felt that good things only happened to others, that I was just an unlucky person. Reflecting on this recent period of time, when these two churches I was responsible for were faced with the CCP’s arrests, it required me to suffer and pay a price and touched upon my fleshly interests, so I began to

complain about everything and blame my bad luck and misfortune. Not only did I not think of proactively doing my duty well, but I also became despondent and resistant, complaining that God kept laying out such environments for me. My pursuit of good luck was essentially to satisfy my fleshly interests; I wished for all good things to come to me and always wanted to profit at others' expense. As for the tasks that required taking risks and suffering, I thought they should all be undertaken by others. As long as I could be comfortable and my flesh could gain benefits, I would be satisfied. I truly was so selfish! On the surface, it seemed like I was doing my duty in God's house, but my heart considered my fleshly interests rather than the church's work and God's eager intentions. This was detestable and loathsome to God, and doing my duty in this way, I would ultimately not gain His approval.

Later, I read more of God's words that say: **"Is it easy to get out of this depression? In fact, it is easy. Just let go of your erroneous perspectives, do not expect everything to go well, or exactly the way you want it to, or smoothly. Do not fear, resist, or reject things that go wrong. Instead, let go of your resistance, calm down, and come before God with an attitude of submission, and accept all that God arranges. Do not pursue so-called 'good luck,' and do not reject so-called 'bad luck.' Give your heart and your whole being to God, let Him do the acting and orchestrating, and submit to His orchestrations and arrangements. God will give you what you need in just measure when you need it. He will orchestrate the environments, people, events, and things that you require, according to your needs and deficiencies, so that you can learn the lessons that you ought to be learning from the people, events, and things that you come across. Of course, the prerequisite to all this is that you must have a mentality of submission**

toward God's orchestrations and arrangements. So, do not pursue perfection; do not reject or fear the occurrence of undesirable, embarrassing, or unfavorable things; and do not use your depression to inwardly resist the occurrence of bad things" (The Word, Vol. 6. On the Pursuit of the Truth I. How to Pursue the Truth (2)). From God's words, I understood His intention. The environments God laid out for me were all good and were all meant to teach me lessons. I should not pursue this so-called good luck and always want to do my duty in a comfortable environment any longer. Continuing like that would only lead to fruitless labor. Instead, I ought to learn to submit to the environments God laid out, and whether favorable or unfavorable, I should seek the truth from them, focusing on reflecting on the corrupt dispositions I revealed and rebelling against the flesh and acting according to God's requirements. This is what aligns with God's intention. Now, brothers and sisters were being arrested, there were security risks for the two church leaders, and some work couldn't be done. As a leader, I ought to fulfill my responsibility at this critical moment. Although handling the church work would be difficult and involve some fleshly suffering, as long as it benefited the church's work, I should do my best to cooperate. Understanding this, I no longer lived in negativity, and I understood from my heart that this was my duty, that it was the responsibility I ought to fulfill. After that, while doing my duty, I actively fellowshiped to resolve any issues or deviations in the church's work. If I encountered problems that I couldn't understand, I discussed them with the two leaders so that they could promptly grasp them, and then we would seek the principles to resolve them. By practicing this way, although I was busy every day, as long as I arranged things reasonably, I could manage it and didn't find it unbearable or difficult.

One day, the upper-level leader sent a letter asking us to quickly organize a set of materials on cleansing and expelling, emphasizing that it was fairly urgent and needed to be collected and organized by people without security risks. Reading this letter, I knew it was most suitable for me to do it. But thinking that I'd have to verify with so many brothers and sisters and would definitely be running around every day, I couldn't help but start having the same old thoughts, "Ugh, the leader clearly asked for someone without security risks, so I can't avoid it even if I wanted to. Having to hurry back and forth like this, who knows how long it'll take to collect and verify these materials." I felt that I was unlucky. When I had this thought, I remembered God's words that said: **"Do not always do things for your own sake and do not constantly consider your own interests; do not consider the interests of man, and give no thought to your own pride, reputation, and status. You must first consider the interests of God's house, and make them your priority. You should be considerate of God's intentions and begin by contemplating whether or not there have been impurities in the performance of your duty, whether you have been loyal, fulfilled your responsibilities, and given it your all, as well as whether or not you have been wholeheartedly thinking about your duty and the work of the church. You must consider these things"**

(The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. Freedom and Liberation Can Be Gained Only by Casting Off One's Corrupt Disposition). God's words brightened my heart. No matter what duty I was faced with, it contained God's intentions. In particular, since this work was so important, wasn't the opportunity to do this work an exaltation from God? Yet, when facing a duty, the first thing I considered was that my flesh would have to suffer again, and I thought that I was unlucky. I was truly too selfish! I ought to prioritize the church's work rather than thinking first about those fleshly difficulties and do my best to

rely on God and cooperate. With this realization, I no longer resisted this duty so much, and I discussed with the church leaders on how to find people to verify the materials. During the verification process, I encountered some difficulties, but I accepted them from God and no longer complained, while also reviewing the deviations and relying on God to continue to cooperate. Eventually, the materials were successfully collected. I sincerely thanked God for His guidance!

Through this experience, I gained some understanding of the erroneous view of pursuing good luck and saw that behind this pursuit lies a corrupt disposition that is selfish and despicable. In fact, all the environments God lays out for me, whether I see them as good or bad, are laid out based on my stature and needs. They are meant to help me seek the truth, recognize my corrupt disposition, and learn lessons from these environments. There is God's wisdom and painstaking intention in them. In the future, I don't want to keep judging all people, events, and things I encounter with a view that is based on luck. I want to learn to submit to the environments God lays out and experience God's work.

9. My Concerns About Dismissing False Leaders

By Jing Wei, China

In September 2020, I was a preacher in the church, responsible for the work of four churches. The leader of one of these churches, Li Ying, had good caliber and was enthusiastic in her duty. I had a great impression of her. But a while later, I found that this church had some clear disbelievers and evil people who still hadn't been cleansed away and were disturbing church life. So, I fellowshiped with Li Ying, exposing her state, and told her the essence and consequences of not doing cleansing work. Li Ying agreed to cleanse away these disbelievers and evil people from the church as soon as possible. But two months later, when I looked into their work again, I found that Li Ying still hadn't done this. She was even siding with the disbelievers and evil people, arguing their cases. As a result, these people who should have been cleared out were still there and being allowed to cause disruptions and disturbances within the church. In addition, there were problems in brothers' and sisters' duties, but Li Ying never fellowshiped the truth to solve them or pruned those people. Instead, she was considering their flesh, and making accommodations and indulgences, leading to them not being responsible in their duties, which caused church work to be impacted. Judging by her consistent behavior, Li Ying was a false leader who didn't do real work and according to principles, should be dismissed immediately. But I thought to myself, "She's the only leader in this church. If I dismiss her right now, then I'll have to worry about the various items of work of this church. Some of these tasks will also require me to implement them in person. Where am I supposed to find the time and energy for that? On top of that, I've got work from several other churches to keep track of. I'll be so busy. I am already over 60 years old, and my health

isn't too good. If I overwork myself, my body may not be able to cope! If I keep Li Ying on, she'll at least be able to see to general affairs and I'll be able to ease up a little." With this in mind, I didn't dismiss her. Then, in December, Li Ying's nonbelieving husband started monitoring and following her. She clearly knew he had poor humanity but she kept on coming to gathering places with no consideration for the others' safety at all. As a result, she endangered quite a few gathering groups. I finally realized just how serious Li Ying's problem was and I stopped her work immediately. I felt afraid after this. I realized that this had been a consequence of my not dismissing Li Ying quickly enough. I was responsible too!

During my devotionals, I read a passage of God's words. God says: **"How you regard God's commissions is extremely important, and this is a very serious matter. If you cannot complete what God has entrusted to people, then you are not fit to live in His presence and you should be punished. It is perfectly natural and justified that humans should complete whatever commissions God entrusts to them. This is man's supreme responsibility, and is just as important as their very lives. If you do not take God's commissions seriously, then you are betraying Him in the most grievous way. In this, you are more lamentable than Judas, and should be cursed. People must gain a thorough understanding of how to treat what God entrusts to them and, at the very least, they must comprehend that the commissions He entrusts to humanity are exaltations and special favors from God, and that they are most glorious things. Everything else can be abandoned. Even if a person must sacrifice their own life, they must still fulfill God's commission"** (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. How to Know Man's Nature). From God's words, I understood that one's duty is

entrusted by God and that it's more important than anything else. Treating it lightly and being irresponsible is betraying God. Doing this is essentially just like Judas, and one will be cursed. That I had been able to practice as a preacher in the church was God's favor. When I found leaders in the church who weren't doing real work, I should dismiss or transfer them, as needed. That was my duty, my responsibility. As a church leader, Li Ying found problems but didn't fellowship the truth to resolve them, and was even impeding the cleansing work. She was delaying clearing out obvious disbelievers and evil people, and was even standing up for them. This confirmed that she was a false leader and should be dismissed promptly. But as for me, I worried that once I dismissed her, I wouldn't be able to find a suitable replacement for a while and I'd have to worry about the church's work more. So I didn't dismiss her in good time, which led to security risks and obstructions to the church's work. I was well aware that false leaders and antichrists are obstacles and roadblocks to brothers' and sisters' life entry and that when one is found, they must be dismissed and eliminated—they cannot be tolerated at all. But to save myself some worry and hardship, I didn't dismiss Li Ying, despite knowing she was a false leader. I saw that I was truly selfish and despicable. This attitude I had toward my duty truly disgusted God. These realizations scared me quite a bit, so I prayed and repented to God, and quickly dismissed Li Ying. I also exposed and fellowshipped on the essence and consequences of her actions, and the others gained some discernment of her. After this, the church elected another leader and gradually, the church's work finally picked up.

In February 2021, a preacher responsible for a church in Chengxi was dismissed because they couldn't do real work, and the leader made me responsible for that church's work. After I took that on, Sister Xue Ming told me about problems with the church leader and the watering deacon,

“The watering deacon is always irresponsible and perfunctory in her duty. She hasn’t watered the newcomers she’s responsible for in over 20 days. Some of them have listened to rumors and left the faith. The church leader is always busy with her day job and rarely gathers with the others or follows up on work. Brothers and sisters have warned her and fellowshiped with her, but she won’t listen. Also, she’s aware that the watering deacon doesn’t do real work and should be dismissed, but not only does she not dismiss her, she even takes her side and defends her. So they are a false leader and a false worker who don’t do actual work and have already delayed church work.” After listening to Xue Ming’s report, I thought, “In light of their behavior, these two should be dismissed. But electing new leaders and workers is no easy task. If I dismiss them both and we can’t elect suitable replacements for a while, won’t I have to handle this church’s work? My energy is limited, so no matter how pressing it is, I have to take it one step at a time.” Seeing that I wasn’t responding, Xue Ming said anxiously, “If false leaders and workers aren’t promptly dismissed, it’ll compromise both the church’s work and brothers’ and sisters’ life entry. Don’t you feel any anxiety or urgency? Doesn’t it matter to you? You better not be like the preacher before who didn’t do real work.” I felt my face burning after hearing this barrage of criticism, and I thought, “I’ve just gotten here, there’s still a lot I don’t understand. I can’t bite off more than I can chew. I’ve got to take this work one step at a time. Anyway, I didn’t say I wouldn’t handle this.” Later on, I realized my state was wrong, so I quickly prayed to God, “God, this situation I faced today was permitted by You, but I keep making excuses for myself. I know that this isn’t in line with Your intention. Please guide me to submit, so that I might reflect and learn from this.” After praying, I recalled a passage of God’s words. God says: **“At present, there are some who carry no burdens for the church.**

These people are slack and sloppy, and only care about their own flesh. Such people are extremely selfish, and they are also blind. If you cannot see this matter clearly, you will not carry any burden. The more considerate you are of God's intentions, the greater the burden He will entrust to you. The selfish are unwilling to suffer such things; they are unwilling to pay the price, and, as a result, they will miss opportunities to be perfected by God. Are they not doing themselves harm? If you are someone who is considerate of God's intentions, then you will develop a true burden for the church. In fact, instead of calling this a burden you bear for the church, it would be better to call it a burden you bear for your own life's sake, because the purpose of this burden you develop for the church is to have you use such experiences to be perfected by God. Therefore, whoever carries the greatest burden for the church, whoever carries a burden for life entry—they will be the ones who are perfected by God. Have you seen this clearly? If the church you are with is scattered like sand, but you are neither worried nor anxious, and you even turn a blind eye when your brothers and sisters are not normally eating and drinking of God's words, then you are not carrying any burdens. Such people are not the kind in whom God delights. The kind of people in whom God delights hunger and thirst for righteousness and are considerate of God's intentions” (The Word, Vol.

1. The Appearance and Work of God. Be Considerate of God's Intentions in Order to Attain Perfection). Thinking over God's words filled me with shame. Hadn't I been neither worried nor anxious about the church's work? When I heard Xue Ming's report about the leader's and the watering deacon's problems, I didn't consider the church's work and didn't quickly investigate and dismiss the false leader and the false worker. Instead, I considered my fleshly interests first, worried that once I dismissed them, replacements would have

to be elected. I'd have to worry and expend energy on that, and my workload would increase. To save myself from paying a price and physical hardship, I felt no urgency to dismiss them, even though I knew they were false leaders and workers. In essence, I was covertly shielding and indulging them, letting them run amok doing bad things in the church and disrupt and disturb the church's work. Xue Ming pruning me for not treating my duty with urgency was a helpful warning to me. It enabled me to quickly reflect on and know my corrupt disposition and repent to God. If false leaders and workers were kept on in the church, there's no knowing how great the losses to the church's work would be. I also realized that I'd been considering my flesh on the previous occasion too. My failure to dismiss a false leader promptly hindered the church's work. Wasn't I making the same mistake? Wanting to save myself from physical hardship, I didn't think about the church's work at all or about the losses caused to the brothers' and sisters' life entry. I wasn't doing real work either, I was behaving like a false leader. My attitude toward my duty truly disgusted God. If I hadn't been pruned, I wouldn't have known to reflect on myself. Realizing these things, I said a silent prayer to God, saying I wanted to repent and do my duty well. The next day, I went to the church with Xue Ming. After investigating, I confirmed that the leader and the watering deacon were indeed not doing real work. They held the same views as nonbelievers, over-analyzing people and things, and didn't accept the truth. They were a false leader and a false worker. They were dismissed soon after that, and replacements for them were selected.

After all that, I wondered, "Why is it that whenever I find false leaders and workers in the church who don't do real work, I don't dismiss them promptly? What exactly is causing this?" Later on, I read a passage of God's words: **"Until people have experienced God's work and**

understood the truth, it is Satan's nature that takes charge and dominates them from within. What, specifically, does that nature entail? For example, why are you selfish? Why do you protect your own position? Why do you have such strong feelings? Why do you enjoy those unrighteous things? Why do you like those evils? What is the basis for your fondness for such things? Where do these things come from? Why are you so happy to accept them? By now, you have all come to understand that the main reason behind all these things is that Satan's poison is within man. So what is Satan's poison? How can it be expressed? For example, if you ask, 'How should people live? What should people live for?' people will answer, 'Every man for himself and the devil take the hindmost.' This single phrase expresses the very root of the problem. Satan's philosophy and logic have become people's lives. No matter what people pursue, they do so for themselves—and so they live only for themselves. 'Every man for himself and the devil take the hindmost'—this is the life philosophy of man, and it also represents human nature. These words have already become the nature of corrupt mankind and they are the true portrait of corrupt mankind's satanic nature. This satanic nature has already become the basis for corrupt mankind's existence. For several thousand years, corrupt mankind has lived by this venom of Satan, right up to the **present day**' (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. How to Walk the Path of Peter). Thinking over God's words made it clear to me that I wasn't dismissing false leaders and workers primarily because I was selfish and lazy. Whatever I was doing, I just wanted to take it easy and not suffer or pay a price. "Every man for himself and the devil take the hindmost" and "Drink today's wine today, and worry about tomorrow, tomorrow" are Satan's philosophies I lived by. I only considered my own benefits and

craved physical comfort. I wasn't considering the church's work at all. On these two recent occasions of dismissing false leaders and workers, I was well aware that they didn't do real work and should be dismissed promptly, but I kept worrying that we wouldn't be able to pick suitable replacements for a while. Then I'd have to worry more about these churches' work, not to mention the physical toll. I was already over 60 and my health wasn't great. If I pushed myself too much, I'd be in for a hard time. So, to give my body a break and save myself from some hardship, I begrudgingly kept them on and didn't hurry to replace them. I felt that with them supporting the work of these churches, I could worry and suffer less. I saw that I was only considering my fleshly interests in my duty, and that to consider my flesh, I was covertly shielding and protecting false leaders and workers, indulging them as they continued to disrupt and disturb the work of the church. I wasn't doing my duty; I was doing evil! I used to always worry about my age, and that my body wouldn't be able to cope with a heavy workload. But in reality, I was just making excuses to be irresponsible and inconsiderate of God's intention. God says: **"God does not give people a load too heavy for them to bear. If you can carry one hundred pounds, God certainly will not give you a load heavier than one hundred pounds. He will not put pressure on you. This is how God is with everyone. And you will not be constrained by anything—any person or any thought and view. You are free"** (The Word, Vol. 6. On the Pursuit of the Truth I. What It Means to Pursue the Truth (15)). Though my health was poor and sometimes I got a little tired as soon as work got busy, I was able to cope with these things. My responsibilities were well within my capabilities. As long as I managed my time reasonably and cooperated more with the others, I could physically cope with the workload. I used to think that way mainly because I was lazy and considering my flesh too much, which made me averse to pressure,

hardship, and paying a price in my duty. I thought about when God had Moses lead the Israelites out of Egypt. Moses was already 80 years old, but he didn't say he was too old and refuse God's commission because he was worried about the physical strain. On the contrary, he answered God's call and was able to fulfill God's commission as God required to the best of his abilities. In the end, he led the Israelites out of Egypt. Some of the other brothers and sisters were pretty much the same age as me, and some were even older than me, and they took on great workloads. They still put their all into their duties just as they always had, and I'd never seen anyone truly exhausted because of their duties. Weren't they experiencing greater hardship and suffering than me? But as for me, I was using my old age and poor health as excuses not to dismiss these false leaders and workers, preferring to keep them in the church, delaying work and the brothers' and sisters' life entry. I was truly selfish and despicable. In fact, God knew my age and the duties I was capable of, and whether I was worn out was in God's hands. As one of the church leaders and workers, I had to fulfill my duty according to principles at all times and protect the church's work. However my health was, I should always submit to God's sovereignty and arrangements. Only this was the reason a created being should possess. Understanding God's intention and requirements, I only wanted to practice the truth, rebel against my flesh, and do my duty well.

After this, I continued to reflect. When I found false leaders and workers, why did I keep using them and not rush to dismiss them? Thinking it over, I found that I had a mistaken view. I'd thought that dismissing false leaders and workers and electing other people to take on their work would be difficult. If I kept them on for a while, they'd at least be able to work on general affairs, which was better than not having anyone. A sister sent me a passage of God's word that relates to this problem and it made things a lot

clearer to me. Almighty God says: **“The type of person who is a false leader does not do real work, and is incapable of doing real work. Their caliber is poor, their eyes and mind are blind, they are incapable of discovering problems, and cannot see through various kinds of people, so they are unable to shoulder the important work of promoting and cultivating various types of talented people. Thus, they have no way to do the work of the church well, and will cause many difficulties for God’s chosen people in their life entry. Considering these factors, it is clear that false leaders are unfit to be church leaders. There are other false leaders who do no specific work of the church and do not make contact with the supervisors of specific work, so they do not know which talented individuals are capable of doing what work, nor which are suited to what work, nor whether their working accords with the principles. They are thus unable to promote and cultivate people of talent. How, then, could such people do the work of the church well? The main reason that false leaders cannot do real work is that their caliber is poor; they have no insight into anything and do not know what real work is. This leads to frequent states of stagnation or paralysis in the work of the church. These are directly related to the false leaders’ failure to do real work. For the past several years, the house of God has stressed, over and over, that evil people and disbelievers must be cleansed away and the false leaders and false workers dismissed. Why must the various evil people and disbelievers be cleansed away? Because after years of believing in God, these people still do not accept the truth at all, and have reached the point where they are beyond hope of salvation. And why must all false leaders and false workers be dismissed? Because they do not do real work, and never promote or cultivate those who pursue the truth; instead, they**

just engage in pointless efforts. This causes the work of the church to be thrown into chaos and paralysis, with existing problems lingering on, unresolved, and it also slows the life entry of God's chosen ones. If all these false leaders and false workers were dismissed, and if all these evil people and disbelievers who disturb the church were cleared out, the work of the church would naturally come to flow smoothly, the life of the church would naturally grow much better, and God's chosen ones would be able to normally eat and drink the words of God and do their duties, and to enter the right track of faith in God. This is what God would like to see" (The Word, Vol. 5. The Responsibilities of Leaders and Workers. The Responsibilities of Leaders and Workers (5)).

From God's words I saw that false leaders and workers do not and cannot do real work. Even if they are reluctantly kept on, the costs outweigh the gains. Not only are they unable to protect church work, they can only disrupt and disturb it. With Li Ying's dismissal, I worried that if I dismissed this false leader, electing a good replacement would take time, which could delay work. I thought that by keeping her on for the time being, at least she could prop up the work, which was better than nobody being there. Thanks to the exposure of God's words and what the facts revealed, I finally saw that this view was not only mistaken, but it was absurd, wrong, and not in line with the truth at all. Once they are found, false leaders and workers should be dismissed promptly and a suitable replacement should be elected to take on the work as soon as possible. Even if a replacement can't be elected immediately, cultivating somebody is much better than keeping a false leader. This is protecting the church's work. I couldn't see this clearly before. I had thought that keeping those false leaders would let me share some work and relax a little. Now I saw that doing so not only hadn't saved me trouble, but had left me more tired and busy than before, for there were always many

deviations and flaws in their work. In the end, lots of problems still had to be handled. It wasn't until they were replaced that the churches' work gradually improved. Also, my requirements and standards for leaders had been too high. I thought that leaders should be able to work as soon as they were elected, so I never felt like there were suitable candidates, and put off replacing those false leaders. But in reality, as long as a person pursues the truth, has the right intentions, is a right person, and has sufficient caliber, they can be nurtured. It doesn't matter if they haven't believed in God for long or haven't been a leader or worker before, for this kind of person can easily gain the Holy Spirit's work since they pursue the truth, and continue to progress in their duties. Realizing these things, my mistaken view of "a false leader is better than no leader" was thoroughly rectified.

Later, the brothers and sisters of a church reported that a leader named Liu Li wasn't doing real work and that she was a false leader. They wanted me to look into it and dismiss her as soon as possible. I thought to myself, "This church is already short of deacons and leaders, and I need to dismiss someone else? Won't I have to worry about electing more people? Also, another church still needs a leader, which is in itself a lot of work. If I dismiss Liu Li, won't that increase my workload?" I wanted to consider my flesh again, but then I realized my state was wrong. I quickly prayed to God, "Oh Almighty God! Each time I have to dismiss a leader, I consider my flesh. I am unable to consider Your intention or protect the church's work. God, please give me the strength to rebel against my flesh, practice the truth, and satisfy You." After praying, I recalled that God's word says: **"For all who perform a duty, no matter how profound or shallow their understanding of the truth is, the simplest way to practice entering into the truth reality is to think of the interests of God's house in everything, and to let go of one's selfish desires, personal intents,**

motives, pride, and status. Put the interests of God's house first—this is the least one should do. If a person who performs a duty cannot even do this much, then how can they be said to be performing their duty? That is not performing one's duty" (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. Freedom and Liberation Can Be Gained Only by Casting Off One's Corrupt Disposition). God's words made me understand that when my personal interests conflict with the church's work, I should set my personal interests aside and put the church's work first. I should consider God's intention first and promptly dismiss false leaders. Only this aligns with God's intention. So I started by fellowshiping with Liu Li, exposing and dissecting the essence and serious consequences of her not doing real work. But a while later, I saw that she still hadn't changed at all, so I dismissed her according to principles. I also fellowshiped with the others and we elected a new leader. When I acted in line with God's requirements, not only did I not feel worn out, but instead, I felt at ease and at peace instead. Being able to improve and enter in this way is all thanks to the guidance of God's words. Thank God!

10. Pretending to Understand Did Me In

By Tammy, South Korea

I was doing design work for the church. Over time, as I completed all kinds of designs and images, my skills greatly improved and I was chosen to be a team leader. I thought to myself, “The fact that I was chosen as team leader means that I have certain skills and talents in my work, that I’m better than the other brothers and sisters and able to take charge of this work. I’ve got to cherish this duty, work hard, seek the truth principles, and do my best. I can’t make mistakes that hinder the church’s work. I’ve got to show everyone that I’m cut out to be a team leader.”

One day, the church leader came and told me, “The church needs a background image for one of our hymn videos. It’ll be harder to make than our previous backgrounds. Since the others are all busy working on different designs right now, we’d like to have you work on it. Do you think you can do it?” Hearing my leader say this, I thought, “I’ve never worked on such a difficult background before, I’m not sure that I could guarantee good results.” But then I thought, “The leader and brothers and sisters will be paying attention to this project—I’ve been doing this duty for over two years now, have handled my fair share of difficult issues and tasks, and learned a decent skill set. This may be the first time I try my hand at such a hard background, and there will definitely be some unforeseen issues, but if I can’t even deal with a task like this, then what will all the others think of me? If I can’t handle it, will they think I’m not a talented worker and haven’t made any progress in my duty? The other brothers and sisters are all working on their own projects now, and if someone else has to be sent over to work with me at this moment, everyone will definitely think I can’t handle big responsibilities, that I can’t shoulder a heavy burden at critical

moments and I'm not cut out to be of great use. I can't let that happen! I've got to take on this project no matter what. I'll just look up what I don't know so I can get it all done right, and show everyone that I can handle challenging tasks." Having made up my mind, I confidently replied, "I can do it, no problem. This is just a slightly more difficult and demanding background than the others. With a little extra effort, I can guarantee the good quality." Seeing that I appeared confident, the leader nodded his head and said, "We've got a tight deadline with this background and the design needs to reflect the meaning and feeling behind the hymn. If you have any problems while designing it, contact us right away." My supervisor also said, "If you really can't make it work, just let us know and we'll assign someone to come help you out." I nodded in agreement, feeling both excited and nervous: I was excited that I was working on such an important design, one that would earn me admiration if I did well, but I was also worried about whether I'd be able to handle such a difficult task, and whether I could provide the quality they wanted. But no matter what, I couldn't let everyone down. I had to start researching right away, trying things out as I went along in order to make the most of this rare opportunity. I would see this task through, regardless of its difficulty.

While designing, it felt like time was flying by and all sorts of issues came up. I could feel the pressure building. The leader and supervisor often asked about my work progress and whether I had any problems. Being so incredibly nervous, I'd just tell them everything was "going fine," when in reality I was shaking: The design still had a lot of areas that needed to be improved. It also called for some major technical breakthroughs. I really had no idea how the final result would turn out. If it didn't turn out well, would everyone see just how unskilled I really was, and say I wasn't capable and just trying to show off? Since I'd promised I'd get it done,

wouldn't I end up humiliating myself if I said I couldn't do it now? So I just had to bite the bullet and figure things out as I went. I still hadn't developed a concept, so brainstorming took a while. One time, the leader came by our studio and watched me work for a short while, so I purposely switched to an easier section and drew it up quickly, to give the impression that I had everything under control. In reality, though, I was so nervous my palms were sweating. Once the leader left, I switched back to the harder section and started racking my brain. I spent a long time thinking it over, but I still couldn't come up with a way to handle it. Even then, I didn't want to admit there was an issue, worrying the leader would question my ability. I thought that since I'd already made such a big claim, it would be embarrassing to go back on it. I just had to grit my teeth and figure things out as I went, but I was very ineffective and felt emotionally drained. I stayed up really late the final night finishing up the design. My leader and supervisor had a look and said it seemed good and only needed a few tweaks. Still, I couldn't cheer myself up—I felt down.

Later on, during my devotionals, I read a passage of God's words: **"If you often have a sense of accusation in your life, if your heart can find no rest, if you are without peace or joy, and are often beset by worry and anxiety about all kinds of things, what does this demonstrate? Merely that you do not practice the truth, do not stand firm in your testimony to God. When you live amid the disposition of Satan, you are liable to often fail to practice the truth, to betray the truth, to be selfish and vile; you only uphold your image, your name and status, and your interests. Always living for yourself brings you great pain. You have so many selfish desires, entanglements, fetters, misgivings, and vexations that you do not have the least peace or joy. To live for the sake of corrupted flesh is to suffer excessively"** (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ

of the Last Days. Life Entry Begins With the Performance of Duty). Thinking about God's words, I realized that the reason I still felt drained and despondent after finishing the design was that I had too much desire for status. To hide my deficiencies, I disguised myself, putting on a false front for others. Wasn't that exhausting? Later on, I came across another passage of God's words which helped me better understand my corrupt disposition. Almighty God says: **"People themselves are created beings. Can created beings achieve omnipotence? Can they achieve perfection and flawlessness? Can they achieve proficiency in everything, come to understand everything, see through everything, and be capable of everything? They cannot. However, within humans, there are corrupt dispositions, and a fatal weakness: As soon as they learn a skill or profession, people feel that they are capable, that they are people with status and worth, and that they are professionals. No matter how unexceptional they are, they all want to package themselves as some famous or exceptional individual, to turn themselves into some minor celebrity, and make people think they are perfect and flawless, without a single defect; in the eyes of others, they wish to become famous, powerful, or some great figure, and they want to become mighty, capable of anything, with nothing they cannot do. They feel that if they sought others' help, they would appear incapable, weak, and inferior, and that people would look down on them. For this reason, they always want to keep up a front. Some people, when asked to do something, say they know how to do it, when they actually do not. Afterward, in secret, they look it up and try to learn how to do it, but after studying it for several days, they still do not understand how to do it. When asked how they are getting on with it, they say, 'Soon, soon!' But in their hearts, they're thinking, 'I'm not there yet, I have no idea, I don't know what to do! I must not let the cat**

out of the bag, I must continue putting on a front, I can't let people see my shortcomings and ignorance, I can't let them look down on me!' What problem is this? This is a living hell of trying to save face at all costs. What kind of disposition is this? Such people's arrogance knows no bounds, they have lost all reason. They do not wish to be like everyone else, they don't want to be ordinary people, normal people, but superhumans, exceptional individuals, or hotshots. This is such a huge problem! With regard to the weaknesses, shortcomings, ignorance, foolishness, and lack of understanding within normal humanity, they will wrap it all up, and not let other people see it, and then keep on disguising themselves. ... What do you say, do such people not live with their heads in the clouds? Are they not dreaming? They do not know who they themselves are, nor do they know how to live out normal humanity. They have never once acted like practical human beings. If you pass your days with your head in the clouds, muddling through, not doing anything with your feet on the ground, always living by your own imagination, then this is trouble. The path in life you choose is not right'' (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. The Five Conditions That Must Be Met to Embark on the Right Track of Belief in God). God's words exposed my current state. Because I had been working in design for a while, had learned some skills and had been selected as a team leader, I believed that I was capable and a rare talent. After I thought this way of myself, I took particular notice of what others thought of me, worrying that they'd spot my inadequacies and say I wasn't fit for the job. Especially with this background image, I hadn't done any task as difficult as this before, and I wasn't sure if I would succeed, but to maintain my reputation and status, and gain the trust of my supervisor and leader, I pretended to have it all under control. When I encountered issues and wasn't making progress, I

didn't ask for help, and instead just struggled in private. When my leader inquired about my progress or any problems I had, I didn't tell him about my real issues, despite being totally lost. Instead, I lied to and deceived the leader and supervisor, even going so far as to pretend I was highly skilled to make the leader think I could get the job done. I put up a false front in every aspect to conceal my inadequacies. I always pretended like I was a talented worker so others would think I could do anything, and knew everything. I realized that I was incredibly vain and arrogant. God's words say: **"People themselves are created beings. Can created beings achieve omnipotence? Can they achieve perfection and flawlessness? Can they achieve proficiency in everything, come to understand everything, see through everything, and be capable of everything? They cannot."** Indeed, how could a corrupt person be perfect and all-capable? It's normal to not understand, or be incapable of doing certain things in one's duty, but I didn't have that attitude toward my deficiencies. Instead, I insisted on painting myself as a talented worker. I didn't want to be seen as just an average, flawed created being. I sought to be perfect and flawless. I was so arrogant that I lost all reason. Because I was always putting up a false front in my duty, worrying that others would see the real me, and not asking for help when I didn't understand something, the design progressed slowly when it should have been completed quickly, and I became emotionally drained. I realized that it was foolish of me to pursue flawlessness. I was always concealing my inadequacies, without the courage to admit and face them. As a result, I not only was tired and hypocritical in my duty, but I also delayed the church's work. Having realized this, I prayed to God, "Dear God! Thank You for Your enlightenment and guidance, which has helped me see how pathetic my concealment has been. I am ready to rectify my faulty views on pursuit in the future, have the right attitude toward my

deficiencies, ask when I don't understand, refrain from concealment and pretense, and do my duty in a down-to-earth manner."

Later on, I read more of God's words: **"You must seek the truth to resolve any problem that arises, no matter what it is, and by no means disguise yourself or put on a false face for others. Your shortcomings, your deficiencies, your faults, your corrupt dispositions—be completely open about them all, and fellowship about them all. Do not keep them inside. Learning how to open yourself up is the first step toward life entry, and it is the first hurdle, which is the most difficult to overcome. Once you have overcome it, entering the truth is easy. What does taking this step signify? It means that you are opening your heart and showing everything you have, good or bad, positive or negative; baring yourself for others and for God to see; hiding nothing from God, concealing nothing, disguising nothing, free of deceit and trickery, and being likewise open and honest with other people. In this way, you live in the light, and not only will God scrutinize you, but other people will also be able to see that you act with principle and a degree of transparency. You do not need to use any methods to protect your reputation, image, and status, nor do you need to cover up or disguise your mistakes. You do not need to engage in these useless efforts. If you can let these things go, you will be very relaxed, you will live without constraints or pain, and you will live entirely in the light"** (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. Part Three). I realized that if I wanted to do my duty well and be commended by God, the key was seeking the truth. No matter what corrupt dispositions I revealed or what issues I had in my duty, I had to open up to God in prayer to seek guidance, dispose of my desire for reputation and status, seek to fellowship with brothers and sisters, refrain from concealment and disguise, open up, and let everyone see the real me, only

do what I was capable of, admit when I wasn't capable, and seek the truth with others. Doing my duty in this way would be less draining and inhibiting—it would be joyful. Having realized this, I opened up in fellowship with my brothers and sisters about the corruption I had revealed in the whole design process and brought up the issues I had encountered for discussion with them. The brothers and sisters taught me some new software operation techniques and drawing methods. After that, I continued to complete the background image, and the entire process went really smoothly. Later, some brothers and sisters said to me, “Your background image looks much better than the previous ones. Could you share your experience and what you learned with us sometime?” I felt so happy when I heard this and felt I had truly been of some use. Thinking back on my experience designing the background, I realized that there's nothing wrong with having deficiencies and there's no harm in others knowing about them. Being able to open up and seek the truth, and put aside one's improper intentions and desires are what's most important. You can feel peaceful and at ease working in this way.

Gradually, I was able to deliver quality designs for difficult projects and was producing more finished products than the other brothers and sisters. They would always ask me for advice on design concepts and other technical questions. At first, I would just tell them what I knew, but as more people asked, I unconsciously began to think, “I guess everyone recognizes my talents now. Otherwise, why would they ask me for advice?” Without noticing, I began to really enjoy this satisfied feeling and was quite pleased with myself. But then something really unexpected happened. In one of the background images I designed for a hymn, my leader noticed an issue that violated principles and called me over to talk about it. He said the image needed to be edited that day or the work would be delayed and asked if I

could do the edit myself or if I needed help from others. I thought to myself, “I designed this image, so if I pass it off to someone else, won’t it seem like my skills are inadequate? Won’t people just think that I talk a big game, but can’t deliver when it counts? That can’t happen! I can’t give up now. If I can fix this problem on my own, everyone will know that I can do my job, that I’m trustworthy and worth cultivating.” Realizing this, I told the leader that I’d fix it on my own according to principles. While editing, there was one part of the image that I just couldn’t come up with a good concept for. Because time was running out and I was still stuck on that concept, I got really stressed, just wanting to get it done as soon as possible, but no matter how I tweaked the design, it wasn’t working out. I was stuck on that concept until 5 in the morning, and still couldn’t think of anything. Only then did I start to ask myself why I was having this issue. I suddenly realized that the reason my design violated principles was that there was some aspect of the principles that I didn’t understand. Having to do this edit had already delayed the work. I wasn’t even sure if my edit would fix things, and this image was urgently needed, so I knew I should ask for some help. But in order to maintain my status and reputation, and conceal my inadequacies, I was just trying to struggle my way through it alone. Wasn’t I delaying the church’s work? Realizing this, I felt incredibly guilty and quickly prayed to God to repent, “Oh God! I’ve been bound up by my corrupt disposition. As soon as I have a problem, I pretend things are fine so others admire me. I can’t face my inadequacies properly. Performing my duty like this is very tiring! Dear God, please guide me to recognize my corruption and let go of my vanity, so that I may practice according to Your words.” After prayer, I thought of the following words of God: **“You always seek greatness, nobility, and status; you always seek exaltation. How does God feel when He sees this? He loathes it, and He will**

distance Himself from you. The more you pursue things like greatness, nobility, and being superior to others, distinguished, outstanding, and noteworthy, the more disgusting God finds you. If you do not reflect upon yourself and repent, then God will loathe you and forsake you. Avoid becoming someone whom God finds disgusting; be a person that God loves. So, how can one attain God's love? By accepting the truth obediently, standing in the position of a created being, acting by God's words with one's feet on the ground, properly performing one's duties, being an honest person, and living out a human likeness. This is enough, God will be satisfied. People must be sure not to hold ambition or entertain idle dreams, not to seek fame, gain, and status or to stand out from the crowd. Even more, they must not try to be a person of greatness or superhuman, superior among men and making others worship them. That is the desire of corrupt humanity, and it is the path of Satan; God does not save such people. If people incessantly pursue fame, gain, and status without repenting, then there is no cure for them, and only one outcome: to be eliminated" (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses

of Christ of the Last Days. The Proper Fulfillment of Duty Requires Harmonious Cooperation). God's words addressed my precise state: I was always chasing reputation, status, and admiration. When I was able to produce more finished designs than the others and completed demanding projects with guaranteed quality, I unconsciously became arrogant. What's more, when the others kept coming to me with questions, I got a deep sense of satisfaction and enjoyed the feeling of being admired. When one of my images had an issue and was sent back, and the leader suggested that another brother or sister help edit it for the sake of time, I didn't consider the church's work, only worrying that letting others help would reveal my incompetence. To maintain my own reputation and status, and avoid being looked down on, I took the edit on

myself. When I encountered issues, rather than asking for help, I gritted my teeth and racked my brains, holding everything up. Outwardly, it seemed like I was working overtime for my duty, but in reality, I was just trying to prove my talents by fixing the image, giving people the sense that I was trustworthy and reliable. I saw that I had too much desire for reputation and status. God scrutinizes our thoughts—even if I was able to deceive the others, I couldn't deceive God, and no matter how well I concealed my inadequacies, if my corrupt disposition was unchanged and I didn't attain the truth, God would still despise me and eliminate me. I had delayed the church's work in my pursuit of reputation and status, and if I didn't self-reflect and repent to God, I'd only be deceiving myself and the others, doing myself harm. Realizing this, I quickly asked a sister who was good at design to help me out. She and I discussed how to edit the image and I had a much clearer concept afterward. Soon after, I had completed the edit.

Later on, I continued reflecting on why I always tried to conceal my inadequacies. I saw a passage of God's words that had a deep impact on me. Almighty God says: **"Is it shameful to not know how to do some things? Is there anyone who can do everything? There's nothing shameful in not knowing how to do some things. Do not forget that you are just an ordinary person. No one esteems you or worships you. An ordinary person is just that: an ordinary person. If you do not know how to do something, just say you do not know how to do it. Why would you try to disguise yourself? People will feel disgusted with you if you're always disguising yourself. Sooner or later, you'll give yourself away, and at that time, you'll lose your dignity and your integrity. This is the disposition of an antichrist—they always think of themselves as jacks-of-all-trades, as someone who can do everything, who is capable and competent in all things. Won't this get them into trouble? What would**

they do if they had an honest attitude? They would say: ‘I’m not proficient in this technical skill; I just have a little bit of experience. I’ve applied all that I know, but I do not understand these new problems we’re encountering. Therefore, we must learn some professional knowledge if we wish to do our duty well. Mastering professional knowledge will allow us to do our duty effectively. God entrusted this duty to us, so we have a responsibility to do it well. We should go and learn this professional knowledge based on an attitude of taking responsibility for our duty.’ This is practicing the truth. A person with the disposition of an antichrist would not do this. If a person has a bit of reason, they will say: ‘I only know this much. You do not need to esteem me, and I do not need to put on airs—won’t that make things easier? It’s miserable to always be disguising ourselves. If there’s something we don’t know, we can learn it together and then work harmoniously to do our duty well. We must have a responsible attitude.’ Upon seeing this, people would think, ‘This person is better than us; when a problem befalls them, they don’t blindly force themselves beyond their limits, nor do they pass it on to others, or shirk responsibility. Rather, they take it on themselves and approach it with a serious and responsible attitude. This is a good person who is serious and responsible toward their work and duty. They are trustworthy. God’s house was right to have entrusted them with this important task. God truly scrutinizes the depths of people’s hearts!’ By doing their duty in this way, they would improve their skills and gain everyone’s approval. How does this approval come about? Firstly, they are approaching their duty with a serious and responsible attitude; secondly, they are able to be an honest person, and they have a practical and studious attitude; thirdly, it can’t be ruled out that they

have the guidance and enlightenment of the Holy Spirit. Such a person has God's blessing; this is what someone with conscience and reason can achieve. Although they have corrupt dispositions, deficiencies, and shortcomings, and they do not know how to do many things, they are still on the right path of practice. They don't disguise themselves or deceive; they have a serious and responsible attitude toward their duty, and a longing and pious attitude toward the truth. Antichrists will never be able to do these things because their way of thinking will always be different from those who love and pursue the truth. Why do they think differently? Because Satan's nature lies within them; they live by the disposition of Satan in order to achieve their goal of assuming power. They always seek to use various means to engage in schemes and tricks, misleading people by hook or by crook into worshipping and following them. Therefore, in order to pull the wool over people's eyes, they find all kinds of ways to disguise themselves, trick, lie, and deceive, to make others believe that they are right about everything, that they are capable at everything, and that they can do anything; that they are smarter than others, that they are wiser than others, that they understand more than others; that they're better at everything than others, and that they are above others in every respect—even that they are the best of the best in any group. They have such a need; this is the disposition of antichrists. Thus, they learn to pretend to be something they are not, producing each of these various practices and manifestations” (The Word, Vol. 4. Exposing Antichrists. Item Eight: They Would Have Others Submit Only to Them, Not the Truth or God (Part Three)). Antichrists are deceitful and wicked by nature. To maintain their status and reputation, there is nothing they won't do; they put on a false front, tell lies and deceive others. I thought of an antichrist that had been expelled from our church: To

establish himself and win admiration, he wouldn't seek help when faced with issues, and pretended to know more than he did, preferring to delay the church's work in order to maintain his status and image. He would only mention his successes and not his failures, causing losses to the church's work on several occasions, and never repented. For this, he was ultimately expelled from the church. I compared his behavior to my own: I didn't focus on seeking the truth principles in my duty, didn't accept God's scrutiny or work in a down-to-earth way, and always put up a false front to seek others' admiration. There was clearly a problem with my design, but despite not having a clear concept of how to edit it, I didn't seek and discuss anything with my brothers and sisters, and instead was determined to fix it on my own. I didn't consider the church's work, and as long as there was still the slightest hope, I didn't want to expose my shortcomings, as if delaying the church's work wasn't a big deal and what was most important was to maintain my image. I did everything to conceal what threatened my image and status, even if it was incredibly draining and arduous to do so. I felt that losing my so-called "good image" would be like losing my life. My actions betrayed an antichrist's disposition. Realizing this, I felt a bit afraid. I may not have done all manners of evil like an antichrist, but I was always seeking reputation, status and the admiration of others, even acting deceitfully and deceiving others. If I didn't resolve this disposition, I would eventually be revealed and eliminated by God. So I prayed to God and repented, willing to cast aside my vanity and status to practice by His words.

Going forward, when there were problems with my designs that I couldn't handle myself, I would quickly contact someone and open up in fellowship, seeking and listening to their suggestions. Sometimes, I would also have them design together with me. One time, I had another problem

with a design and failed to make progress even after thinking it over for a while. My leader asked about my progress and I wanted to put up a false front, but I quickly realized that I was trying to maintain status and reputation again. Then, a passage of God's words came to me: **"If you hold nothing back, if you do not put on a front, a pretense, or cover things up, if you lay yourself bare to the brothers and sisters, do not hide your innermost ideas and thoughts, but instead allow others to see your honest attitude, then the truth will gradually take root in you, it will blossom and bear fruit, it will yield results, little-by-little. If your heart is increasingly honest, and increasingly oriented toward God, and if you know to protect the interests of God's house when you perform your duty, and your conscience is troubled when you fail to protect these interests, then this is proof that the truth has had an effect in you, and has become your life"** (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. Part Three). God's words were deeply motivating. I knew I shouldn't continue to put up a false front; I had to face my inadequacies honestly and calmly. No matter what others thought of me, I had to tell the truth, and seek a solution with the others. There happened to be a gathering that day, so I opened up in fellowship about my difficulties and corruptions. After speaking, I felt at ease. When I discussed everything with the others, they helped me come up with a way to fix the design, and soon after, I completed the edit. I was so happy! I could feel how great it was to open up and be honest without putting on a false front! It was all through God's salvation that I was able to realize this and achieve transformation. Thank God!

11. Not Striving in My Duty Harmed Me

By Owen, Spain

In 2018, I was working in the church as a video creator. At first, because I wasn't familiar with technical skills and the various principles, I studied hard and tried to master the relevant skills. After a while, my technical competency was much improved and I was selected as team leader. I was thrilled and was more than willing to work hard to fulfill my duty. Later on, a problem arose in a complicated video project, and my leader sent me to follow up on it and resolve the issue. Faced with a complicated workflow and my lack of technical skills, I worked with the brothers and sisters to come up with solutions at first. But after a period of hard work during which things started to run more smoothly and my own technical skills improved, I began to slack off. I thought to myself, "This project might not yet be running optimally, but it's way better than it was before. I just need to keep things running like they are now. There's no need to check in that often. It's so tiring to be on edge all the time." After that, I rarely looked into new skills and neglected to learn more technical skills. A few times, there were problems with the videos I created and the others advised me to improve my skills. Even though I knew they were right, I thought to myself, "I have enough work as it is. If I were to squeeze in more time for study—setting aside how tiring it would be—what if, after spending this extra time and energy, my results didn't improve much? Wouldn't all that extra work be in vain?" So I didn't pay any mind to the others' advice. After that, my leader noticed that progress on our work was slow and asked me to identify what the problem was. My work partner reminded me again and again to resolve this issue. At the time, I was a bit resistant. I thought, "We might be progressing a little bit slowly, but we're

getting better results than before. We shouldn't rush this." But deep down I knew that if I went through and planned the work more carefully, there really was still more room for improving work efficiency. But every time I thought about the work stress I already had and how tiring it would be to spend even more time on this work, I constantly put it off. Later on, my leader brought up the problem with me twice more, and out of concern for my reputation, only then did I reluctantly go through the motions of reviewing the situation. Ultimately, though, I still couldn't find a suitable solution.

Afterward, I wasn't willing to put any thought into the team's work or pay a price to do better. When I had free time, I just wanted to rest and even overslept on a few occasions in a row, delaying our work. When running errands, I sometimes lingered outside, avoiding my duty for a time. During lulls in our work, I also didn't think about how to improve my skills, resting while I had the chance instead. Just like that, I became increasingly slack, just going through the motions while following up on and assigning work. I almost never helped others summarize deviations in their work, and when problems arose, I didn't want to put any thought into how to resolve them. As a result, we ended up procrastinating on videos that clearly could have been finished ahead of schedule. During that time, problems continually arose in the videos I created and none of the brothers and sisters in my team improved in their work. If even the slightest difficulty arose in the work, everyone would complain. Not only did I fail to solve this through fellowship, but I even went along with this complaint. Because I failed to do real work and didn't improve after the leaders and workers fellowshiped with me several times, I was soon dismissed. I felt awful, so I prayed to God and reflected on myself.

One day, during my devotionals, I saw that God's words said: **"There are some people who are unwilling to suffer at all in their duties, who always complain whenever they encounter a problem and refuse to pay a price. What kind of attitude is that? It is a perfunctory one. If you perform your duty perfunctorily, and approach it with an irreverent attitude, what will the result be? You will perform your duty poorly, though you are capable of performing it well—your performance will not be up to standard, and God will be very dissatisfied with the attitude you have toward your duty. If you could have prayed to God, sought the truth, and put your whole heart and mind into it, if you could have cooperated in this way, then God would have prepared everything for you in advance, so that when you were handling matters, everything would fall into place, and get good results. You would not need to exert a vast amount of energy; when you did your utmost to cooperate, God would have already arranged everything for you. If you are slippery and slack off, if you do not attend properly to your duty, and always go down the wrong path, then God will not act upon you; you will lose this opportunity, and God will say, 'You are no good; I cannot use you. Go stand off to the side. You like being wily and slacking off, don't you? You like being lazy, and taking it easy, do you not? Well then, take it easy forevermore!' God will give this grace and opportunity to someone else. What do you say: Is this a loss or a gain? (A loss.) It is an enormous loss!"** (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. Part Three). After reading God's words, I thought back on my time as team leader. I saw that I had been just as God's words exposed. I was indifferent, irresponsible, perfunctory, and slippery toward my duty. When I first started serving as team leader, I put in the time and effort, but once my skills improved and I achieved some results, I became complacent, resting

on my laurels and always pandering to the flesh. I only ever thought about how to relax and have an easy go of it. I wasn't willing to devote any effort to the work to make it better. Even when I clearly saw there were issues, I didn't resolve them at once, and when others pointed them out, I ignored them. As team leader, when I saw others in the team complaining about their issues, not only did I fail to fellowship the truth to resolve their issues, I even went along with and agreed with them. It was as if no matter how much the video production work was delayed or how many problems brothers and sisters had, it had nothing to do with me. I just wanted to enjoy physical pleasures and avoid tiring myself out. As a result, issues continually cropped up in the videos we produced, which seriously delayed the production progress. I was trifling with a very important duty; for the sake of the comfort and ease of my flesh, I dared to act perfunctorily, deceive God and fool others with my eyes wide open. Where was my God-fearing heart? God abhorred and hated such attitudes toward the duty. Thinking back on all the issues in my work, if I had just put the time in and paid a price, things wouldn't have gotten that bad. But I was lazy and didn't want to suffer or feel fatigue. As a result, I harmed the video production work. I was so selfish, despicable and lacked humanity! I had become so degenerate and decadent and I didn't even realize it. God had orchestrated reminders for me and I still didn't reflect and repent. How could I have been so numb and intransigent? Having realized all that, I felt guilty and upset. I really didn't deserve to be a leader given I was so irresponsible and had no humanity. It was my own fault that I had been dismissed.

Later, I saw another passage of God's words: **"Take a person with a sense of responsibility, whenever they are told something or something is instructed to them, regardless of whether it is by a leader, worker, or the Above, they will always think, 'Well, since they think this highly of**

me, I must handle this matter well and not let them down.’ Wouldn’t you dare entrust a matter to such a person with conscience and reason? The person you can entrust to handle a matter is definitely someone whom you think well of and believe to be trustworthy. Particularly if the things they have done for you have all been carried out very conscientiously and have completely reached your requirements, you will think they are a person worthy of trust. Inside you will really admire and think highly of them. People are willing to associate with this type of person, to say nothing of God. Do you think God would entrust church work and a duty man is obligated to do to a person who is not trustworthy? (No, He would not.) What is God’s expectation of a person to whom He has allocated a particular task in the church? Firstly, God hopes that they are responsible, that they treat the task with great importance, and do it well. Secondly, God hopes they are a person who is worthy of trust, that no matter how much time passes, and no matter how their environment changes, their sense of responsibility does not waver, and their character stands up to the test. If they are a trustworthy person, God will be reassured. He will no longer monitor or follow up on this matter because inside, God trusts them. When God gives them this task, they are sure to complete it **without any slipups**” (The Word, Vol. 5. The Responsibilities of Leaders and Workers. The Responsibilities of Leaders and Workers (8)). Through God’s words, I learned that a person with true humanity is responsible in their duty, able to accept God’s scrutiny, and able to stand fast in their duty, fulfilling their responsibility and loyalty exactly according to principles, no matter what situation they find themselves in. This is the attitude we ought to have in our duties. Given that the church had assigned me to be in charge of the video work, at the very least I should have done what I could to the best of my abilities,

and identified and resolved problems and difficulties that occurred in the work in a timely fashion to ensure our work proceeded normally. When I took on this duty, I promised readily but later on, I only cared about my own comfort and ease and didn't do any real work at all, even when others repeatedly prodded and exhorted me to. I held the title of "team leader" but didn't get anything done, and failed to fulfill even the bare minimum of the responsibilities I should. As a result, I delayed the church's video production work. I truly lacked humanity and was untrustworthy! Based on how I'd acted, I should have been eliminated long before. It was only through God's mercy and tolerance that I was allowed to continue doing the duty in that team. At the time, I thought, "I've got to cherish this opportunity and do my utmost in my duty." After that, I stopped being content with how things were in my duty and on top of completing work on the videos I was assigned every day, I kept looking for ways to increase my efficiency, pinpointed our issues and deviations, and reported them to the team leader in a timely fashion. I also discussed ways to solve problems with everyone else. Even though it was more tiring to work in this way, I felt much more peaceful and at ease, knowing I had fulfilled some of my responsibilities.

Soon after, the church leader saw that I'd changed somewhat and assigned me to oversee a video project. I cherished the opportunity to do this duty and I wanted to give it my best effort. I actively checked in on the work every day and compiled all the deviations we were having. When I noticed issues, I'd find a way of solving them right away and if I couldn't resolve them, I'd consult and discuss them with the team leader. But a little while later, when we achieved some results in our work and my skills had improved, my former laziness came creeping back in. I thought, "These days the work is all going according to schedule and there are no big issues.

I should rest up a bit. If I work this much every day and have so much to worry about, it'll eventually be more than I can handle.” As soon as I thought this, I became slack, only doing things on schedule in my work again, no longer thinking about improving my skills or resolving issues and deviations, and not even bothering to check in with the brothers and sisters on the situation of their work. Whenever I had any free time, I just wanted to relax and sometimes, while working or studying technical skills, I watched amusing videos or dramas to pass the time. As a result, videos that could have been finished ahead of time were held up and our work results began to go south. Those days, I was all dazed and muddle-headed. I didn't gain any light when reading God's words and felt a darkness spreading within me. Also, when I prayed to God, I couldn't feel His presence. Even though I knew that continuing in that way was dangerous, I still couldn't control myself and I felt truly pained and tormented. At that time, I happened to see a passage of God's words: **“If believers are just as casual and unrestrained in their speech and conduct as nonbelievers are, then they are even more wicked than nonbelievers; they are archetypal demons”** (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. A Warning to Those Who Do Not Practice the Truth). I felt as if God's words were directly exposing me. I had believed in God for many years, but I still failed to attend to my duties and sought leisure when I should have been working, showing no sincerity at all. In the secular world, one has to abide by the rules set by one's company, and while at work, one has to do their job diligently and not slack off. But while doing my duty in the church, I didn't even possess a basic sense of responsibility, and casually set my duty aside just to satisfy my flesh. Given how dissolutely and unrestrainedly I had acted, in what way did I really deserve to be called a Christian? I wasn't even good at laboring in my duty, much less doing my duty in a way that is up to standard. I hated myself for

pandering to my flesh—why did I lack even the slightest bit of resolve to rebel against it? I thought of my brothers and sisters in mainland China who would risk arrest and torture by the CCP before abandoning their duties, yet there I was doing my duty in a free and democratic country, having escaped from China, and I wasn't even willing to put a little more thought into my work or pay a price. I was acting like a complete good-for-nothing—I didn't have the slightest bit of dignity or character. The more I thought about it, the more I felt ashamed to face the brothers and sisters, much less face God. And I began to reflect, "I already failed once before due to pandering to my flesh and shirking my duties. Why hadn't I learned from my previous mistakes? Why was I so flighty and fickle in my work?" I prayed over and over to God asking Him to enlighten and illuminate me so I could find the root cause of my issue.

One day, I came across these passages of God's words: **"Why are people always undisciplined and lazy, as though they are the living dead? This touches on the issue of their nature. There is a kind of laziness in human nature. No matter what task people are doing, they always need someone to supervise them and spur them on. Sometimes people are considerate of the flesh, crave physical comfort, and always hold something back for themselves—these people are full of devilish intentions and cunning schemes; they are truly no good at all. They always do less than their best, no matter what important duty they are doing. This is irresponsible and disloyal. I have said these things today to remind you not to be passive at work. You must be able to follow whatever I say"** (The Word, Vol. 5. The Responsibilities of Leaders and Workers. The Responsibilities of Leaders and Workers (26)). **"False leaders do not do real work, but they know how to be an official. What is the first thing they do once they become a leader? It is to buy people over. They take the approach**

of 'A new manager is eager to impress': First they do a few things to curry favor with people and handle a few things that improve everybody's day-to-day welfare. They first try to make a good impression on people, to show everyone that they are in tune with the masses, so that everyone praises them and says, 'This leader acts like a parent toward us!' Then they officially take over. They feel that they have popular support and that their position has been secured; then they begin to enjoy the benefits of status, as though they were their proper due. Their mottos are, 'Life is all about eating well and dressing nice,' 'Life is short, so enjoy it while you can,' and 'Drink today's wine today, and worry about tomorrow, tomorrow.' They enjoy each day as it comes, they have as much fun as they can, and they give no thought to the future, much less do they consider what responsibilities a leader should fulfill and what duties they should do. They preach a few words and doctrines and do a few tasks for appearance's sake as a matter of routine—they do not do any real work. They are not unearthing real problems in the church and completely solving them, so what is the point in them doing such superficial tasks? Is this not deceitful? Can important tasks be entrusted to this kind of false leader? Are they in line with principles and conditions of God's house for selecting leaders and workers? (No.) These people don't have any conscience or reason, they are devoid of any sense of responsibility, and yet they still wish to act like an official as a church leader—why are they so shameless? For some people who have a sense of responsibility, if they are of poor caliber, they cannot be leaders—and that's to say nothing of human trash that has no sense of responsibility at all; they are even less qualified to be leaders. Just how lazy are such gluttonous and indolent false leaders? They discover an issue, and they are aware that this is an

issue, but they don't take it seriously and pay it no mind. They are so irresponsible! Though they are good talkers and seem to have a little caliber, they can't solve various problems in the church's work, leading to the work grinding to a standstill; the problems keep piling up, but these leaders do not concern themselves with them, and insist on carrying out a few superficial tasks as a matter of routine. And what is the end result? Do they not make a mess of church work, do they not screw it up? Do they not cause division and chaos in the church? This is the inevitable outcome" (The Word, Vol. 5. The Responsibilities of Leaders and Workers.

The Responsibilities of Leaders and Workers (8)). Pondering over God's words, I realized that the reason I was complacent and lacked initiative in my duty was that I was lazy and pleasure-seeking by nature. My mind was full of satanic philosophies for worldly dealings like "Life is all about eating well and dressing nice," "Drink today's wine today, and worry about tomorrow, tomorrow," and "Treat yourself well, for life is short." I lived according to these satanic fallacies, thinking that in this life on earth, I should enjoy myself. I couldn't justify constant suffering and exhaustion. As a result, I was unable to persevere in anything I did. I took the smallest result in my work as capital and became complacent and decadent. It was just like my school years: Whenever I got good grades and was praised by my teachers and classmates, I wouldn't want to continue putting thought and energy into my studies and would just want to have fun. I would stop caring about listening in class or doing my homework. But as soon as my grades started suffering and my parents and teachers got stricter with me, I'd intensify my studies and put in the effort until my grades came back up, at which time I'd relax again and want to go back to having fun. Those years, I was continually controlled by these decadent ideas and became ever lazier, more dispirited and lacking in initiative. I was flighty and fickle in everything I

did, wasn't willing to suffer or pay a price and was becoming less and less willing to put in the effort in my duty. Both in my previous role as team leader and my current role as a team member checking on work progress, I was equally lazy and lacking in initiative. I coasted as soon as I produced any results, and wanted to alternate work with rest, so I wouldn't suffer losses and become exhausted. Even when I clearly knew there were issues in the work, I didn't resolve them, preferring to waste away my time with petty amusements rather than sacrifice a little more of myself and pay a little more price for my duty. I only did enough to keep up appearances and deceive and fob off my leader. I realized that not only was I lazy, I was also cunning and slippery, wanting nothing more than to live my life in relaxation and ease. I had enjoyed so much of the watering and provision of God's words as well as God's care and protection, but still failed to do even the bare minimum of responsibilities. Wasn't I just an idle waste of space, a parasite in the church? Where was my humanity and reason? I was reminded of a line from the Bible that says: "And the prosperity of fools shall destroy them" (Proverbs 1:32). If I didn't repent, even if the church didn't eliminate me for the time being, God scrutinizes all things, and the Holy Spirit would stop working within me. Sooner or later I would be eliminated.

After that, through eating and drinking God's words, I started to change my attitude toward my duty. God's words say: **"How you regard God's commissions is extremely important, and this is a very serious matter. If you cannot complete what God has entrusted to people, then you are not fit to live in His presence and you should be punished. It is perfectly natural and justified that humans should complete whatever commissions God entrusts to them. This is man's supreme responsibility, and is just as important as their very lives. If you do not take God's commissions seriously, then you are betraying Him in the**

most grievous way. In this, you are more lamentable than Judas, and should be cursed. People must gain a thorough understanding of how to treat what God entrusts to them and, at the very least, they must comprehend that the commissions He entrusts to humanity are exaltations and special favors from God, and that they are most glorious things. Everything else can be abandoned. Even if a person must sacrifice their own life, they must still fulfill God's commission"

(The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. How to Know Man's Nature). "Man must pursue to live out a life of meaning, and should not be satisfied with his current circumstances. To live out the image of Peter, he must possess the knowledge and experiences of Peter. Man must pursue things that are higher and more profound. He must pursue a deeper, purer love of God, and a life that has value and meaning. Only this is life; only then will man be the same as Peter. You must focus on being proactive toward your entry on the positive side, and must not passively allow yourself to backslide for the sake of momentary ease while ignoring more profound, more specific, and more practical truths. Your love must be practical, and you must find ways to free yourself from this depraved, carefree life that is no different from an animal's. You must live out a life of meaning, a life of value, and you must not fool yourself or treat your life like a toy to be played with. For everyone who aspires to love God, there are no unobtainable truths and no justice for which they cannot stand firm. How should you live your life? How should you love God, and use this love to satisfy His intentions? There is no greater matter in your life. Above all, you must have such aspirations and perseverance, and should not be like those who are spineless, those who are weaklings. You must learn how to experience a meaningful life and experience meaningful truths, and

should not treat yourself perfunctorily in that way” (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. The Experiences of Peter: His Knowledge of Chastisement and Judgment). Through God’s words I realized that the value and meaning of life are found in fulfilling one’s duty as a created being. If you’re always seeking comfort and ease, lack initiative and are perfunctory in your duties, this is a betrayal of God, and He curses and abhors such behavior. I thought of how Peter diligently sought to love and satisfy God his whole life, always holding himself strictly to God’s words and trying to improve. He always endeavored to practice the truth and satisfy God, ultimately being crucified upside down for God and bearing a resounding testimony. Then there’s Noah. After accepting God’s commission, he worked for 120 years to construct the ark, never balking even when faced with countless difficulties and enormous suffering, striving endlessly until the ark was finished. Comparing myself to how Noah and Peter treated God and their duty, I felt incredibly ashamed. I realized that I was both selfish and lazy and didn’t have the slightest bit of humanity. I didn’t have the slightest sense of responsibility toward my duty, I was perfunctory, and I procrastinated. As soon as more was asked of me or work got busy, I’d start complaining about being tired and would slack off and pander to my flesh even when being prodded. I didn’t have a God-fearing heart at all. The way I was pursuing the truth, I’d ultimately only be doing myself in. But I always thought I was in the right and was satisfied with just putting in the smallest effort. I was so numb, foolish and ignorant! Even though I’d been doing my duty this way, God still gave me chances to repent. I couldn’t keep hurting God’s feelings through decadence. So I prayed to God, saying, “Dear God, I recognize that my nature is indolent and I lack humanity. I don’t want to keep living in this way. I want to earnestly pursue the truth and fulfill my duty. Please scrutinize my heart.”

From then on, I put more time and energy into my duty, and even though my schedule was full every day, I still squeezed in some time to study and improve my technical skills. I also regularly summarized the problems and deviations in my work and ceaselessly strove to improve my skills. A little while later, I started getting better results in the videos I produced. I noticed that when I shared what I'd learned with my brothers and sisters it seemed to be helpful for them as well. I felt really peaceful and at ease. It was a bit more work to do my duty in this way, and there was less time to rest, but I didn't feel tired or as if I were suffering. In fact, I felt much more clear-minded—nothing like before when I'd gone through every day muddle-headed and scatterbrained. It also became easier to see any problems in our work and through fellowship with my brothers and sisters and God's enlightenment and guidance, we resolved many issues in a timely manner. But because I'd been corrupted too profoundly by Satan, its ideas of indolence still affected me from time to time. When I started getting good results, I once again became a bit complacent and wanted to pander to my flesh. Once, while inspecting one of our videos, I noticed an action film come up in my feed. I thought, "It's been so stressful at work recently—it won't hurt to watch a little bit and let off some steam." As I watched, I suddenly realized that I was back to my old tricks. I saw a passage of God's words: **"You want to be perfunctory when you perform your duty. You try to slack off, and try to avoid God's scrutiny. At such times, hurry before God to pray, and reflect on whether this was the right way to act. Then think about it: 'Why do I believe in God? Such perfunctoriness might get past people, but will it get past God? What's more, my belief in God is not to slack off—it is in order to be saved. My acting thus is not the expression of normal humanity, nor is it beloved by God. No, I could slack off and do as I pleased in the outside world,**

but now I am in the house of God, I am under the sovereignty of God, under the scrutiny of God's eyes. I am a person, I must act according to my conscience, I cannot do as I please. I must act according to God's words, I must not be perfunctory, I cannot slack off. So how should I act to not slack off, to not be perfunctory? I must put in some effort. Just now I felt it was too much trouble to do it like this, I wanted to avoid hardship, but now I understand: It may be a lot of trouble to do it like that, but it is effective, and so that is how it should be done.' When you are working and still feel afraid of hardship, at such times you must pray to God: 'Oh God! I am a lazy and sly person, I beg You to discipline me, to reproach me, so that my conscience feels something, and I have a sense of shame. I don't want to be perfunctory. I beg You to guide and enlighten me, to show me my rebelliousness and my ugliness.' When you pray thus, reflect and try to know yourself, this will give rise to a feeling of regret, and you will be able to hate your ugliness, and your wrong state will begin to change, and you will be capable of contemplating this and saying to yourself, 'Why am I perfunctory? Why am I always trying to slack off? Acting like this is devoid of any conscience or reason—am I still someone who believes in God? Why don't I take things seriously? Don't I just need to put in a little more time and effort? It's no great burden. This is what I ought to be doing; if I can't even do this, am I fit to be called a human being?' As a result, you will make a resolution and swear an oath: 'Oh God! I have let You down, I truly am too deeply corrupted, I am without conscience or reason, I have no humanity, I wish to repent. I beg You to forgive me, I will surely change. If I do not repent, I would that You punish me.' Afterward, your mentality will turn around, and you will begin to change. You will act and perform your duties with

conscientiousness, with less perfunctoriness, and you will be able to suffer and pay a price. You will feel that doing your duty in this way is wonderful, and you will have peace and joy in your heart. When people can accept God's scrutiny, when they can pray to Him and rely on Him, their states will soon be changed" (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. Treasuring God's Words Is the Foundation of Belief in God). After pondering God's words, I found a way of practice. I was indolent by nature, preferred comfort and leisure, and was not willing to suffer. On my own, I wouldn't be able to resolve this issue; I had to pray to and rely on God and accept His scrutiny. The next time I wanted to pander to my flesh and be slippery or slack off, I should pray to God right away and ask Him to discipline and chasten me. Only then would I be able to rebel against my flesh and do my duty well. So I told God about my state in prayer and asked for Him to discipline me. After my prayer, I calmed down and continued reviewing the video, carefully considering principles and looking up relevant information. When I was thinking over my work, I could feel God's guidance and I was able to quickly identify issues in the video and devise a way to resolve them.

Through that experience, I gained more faith in dealing with my laziness. I saw that I just had to truly rely on God and accept His scrutiny in my work. If I started pandering to my flesh again, I could pray to and rely on God to consciously restrain myself. In that way, I'd have the strength to overcome my laziness and peacefully do my duty. These days, even though I still often reveal thoughts and ideas for comfort and ease, I know that as long as I follow God's words and ceaselessly practice and enter into them, these corrupt dispositions will surely be cleansed and changed.

12. My Difficult Path to Harmonious Cooperation

By Xincheng, China

In July of 2020, I was elected as a church leader and put in charge of the church's work along with Sister Chen Shi. When I first started in that duty, I lacked a clear grasp of many principles and would discuss with her whenever I had a question. I readily accepted any advice she gave to me. After a while, I started getting some results in my duty; I felt like I was competent in my work and could operate independently. After that, when assigning work, I'd just handle it myself without discussing with Chen Shi. Even in some cases where we should've come to a decision together, I'd make the decision myself. Seeing that I wasn't acting according to principle, Chen Shi would often remind me to stop making arbitrary decisions. Sometimes she'd even say this in front of the deacons. I felt like she had had it out for me—she had no regard for my dignity and was embarrassing me. So I felt a bit resistant to her. Sometimes when we discussed work, she'd reject my ideas, and I'd get defiant, thinking: "We're both in charge of the church's work, so why is it that what you say is right, and what I say is wrong? You're always rejecting my ideas—doesn't that make it seem like you're better than me? Won't the brothers and sisters think I'm a bad leader? How will I face everyone then?" I developed a bias against her. After that, when we discussed work, as soon as my idea was rejected, I would just go silent. Even though sometimes I thought she was right, the thought of relenting to her made me uncomfortable. Over time, my bias against her only grew. I didn't want to talk to her, much less did I want to discuss work with her. She was really constrained by me, and I also felt very inhibited and repressed.

In January of 2021, due to health issues, our long-standing lack of harmonious cooperation, and feeling constrained by me, Chen Shi succumbed to a bout of negativity from which she never recovered. She eventually resigned from her position. In October, the church was holding an election to fill a vacant leadership spot. An upper leader brought up Chen Shi, asking about her situation. One co-worker, Sister Wang Zhixin, said, “Her state has greatly improved recently and she’s bearing more of a burden in her duty.” This made me feel a bit worried: “I guess she thinks highly of Chen Shi. Hearing that, the leader will certainly think Chen Shi is suitable for the position. If she really is elected, then won’t that mean we’ll be working together again?” Thinking back on our time together, I felt terrified: “Before, when we had different opinions on how to proceed with work, most co-workers would side with Chen Shi—no one listened to me. She also has a sense of justice. When she noticed I wasn’t acting by principle, she’d point that out to me, making me feel embarrassed. It was really miserable working with her. If I have to work with her again, won’t it be the same? If she’s always pointing out my problems, won’t the image I’ve established among the brothers and sisters be ruined?” Realizing this, I really didn’t want to work with Chen Shi. I thought, “This won’t do, I’ve got to tell everyone about the corruption she had revealed before, otherwise it’ll be a real pain if she’s elected.” With that, I quickly described all of her poor behaviors, including how she was concerned with status and didn’t bear a burden in her duty, and more. Worrying that I wasn’t being specific enough, I also brought up some real examples to prove my point. The leader perceived that I couldn’t treat Chen Shi fairly, and fellowshipped with me on the principle of treating others fairly, but I didn’t take it in. A few days later, the election had officially started, and Sister Li Ming asked me about Chen Shi’s situation. I thought to myself, “She’s not close with Chen Shi

and doesn't know her well. I've got to let her know Chen Shi isn't suited to be a leader. That way, she won't vote for her." So I told her all about Chen Shi's bad behaviors from before, including not bearing a burden in her duty. But just then, a sister nearby said, "Chen Shi didn't bear a burden then because she was in a bad state. Lately, she's turned her state around and is bearing a burden in her duty. Also, she patiently fellowships with and helps us when there's something we don't understand in our duties." When I heard this, I got anxious: "Why do you keep complimenting Chen Shi? Did you already vote for her? Will Li Ming vote for her too after she heard what you said? If she really is elected, we'll be working together again. Then, not only will I be unable to distinguish myself, I'll have to be corrected by her all the time too. It'd be better if a new partner was selected. That way, since I've been a leader for a while and understand more principles, they'll agree with my opinions most of the time. Even if I do something wrong, they'll probably not see it clearly and won't directly criticize me, so my status will be unchallenged." The more I thought about it, the more I felt that I couldn't let Chen Shi be elected. So I immediately said Chen Shi didn't have much life experience and only shared words and doctrines. Seeing Li Ming nod her head, I felt a bit relieved, thinking it meant she probably wouldn't vote for Chen Shi. To my surprise, in the end Chen Shi and another sister tied for most votes. I became even more worried that Chen Shi would be elected and start working with me again. A while later, the leader asked me, "If Chen Shi really is elected, how will you feel?" The question got me worried that they might really elect Chen Shi, so I hurriedly said: "Chen Shi doesn't have much life experience and she has a gravely corrupt disposition...." The leader could tell how resistant I was to Chen Shi and again exposed me, "You only notice people's weaknesses and never note their strengths. You won't be able to collaborate well with

anyone being like that. You're being arrogant and conceited." Hearing the leader say that I wouldn't collaborate well with anyone hit me hard. I felt like the leader had uncovered my intentions, and certainly wouldn't think well of me. Now, the brothers and sisters and the leaders both liked Chen Shi, so how would I continue doing my duty? I felt just awful and didn't even want to be a leader anymore. I thought, "If you all think she's so good, just elect her already." So I said to the leader, "I don't have good humanity and can't collaborate with anyone. I can't do this duty anymore. I think you should select another leader to replace me." The leader fellowshiped with me, saying, "I'm not saying you're being arrogant and conceited to delimit you, but to press you to seek the truth and resolve your corrupt disposition...." Hearing this, I realized I was venting my anger on my duty, and felt a bit guilty and uneasy. But when I thought about working with Chen Shi, I'd get agitated. I didn't want to deal with this situation, so I said I had other work as an excuse and left. I felt really gloomy inside—I realized I was standing in opposition to God and He had hidden His face from me. I was also avoiding the situation He had arranged for me. If I didn't turn things around, God would despise me and I'd lose the work of the Holy Spirit. At this point, I felt a bit frightened, so I came before God in prayer: "God, there is a lesson I must learn from the situation You've arranged for me today. It's wrong of me to avoid and resist it, but I'm not sure how to reflect on and understand myself. Please guide me to submit to Your arrangements and learn a lesson in the process." After prayer, I felt a bit more peaceful.

The election result was announced the next day: Chen Shi had been elected as leader. The news didn't affect me that much. I began to reflect on myself: I had constantly been criticizing Chen Shi's corruption and inadequacies, but had never mentioned her strengths and merits. Wasn't I

excluding her? So I looked up passages of God's words concerning how antichrists exclude their dissenters. One passage of God's words really hit home. Almighty God says: **"How do antichrists exclude and attack those who pursue the truth? They often use methods that others see as reasonable and proper, even using debates about the truth to gain leverage, in order to attack, condemn, and mislead other people. For example, an antichrist thinks that if their partners are people who pursue the truth, they can threaten their status, and thus the antichrist will deliver lofty sermons and discuss spiritual theories to mislead people and make people think highly of them. That way they can belittle and suppress their partners and co-workers, and make people feel that although the partners of their leader are people who pursue the truth, they are not their leader's equal in terms of caliber and ability. Some people even say, 'Our leader's sermons are lofty, and no one can compare.' For an antichrist, hearing that kind of comment is extremely satisfying. They think to themselves, 'You're my partner, don't you have some truth realities? Why can't you speak with the eloquence and elevation that I do? You are thoroughly humiliated now. You lack the ability, yet you dare contend with me!'" That is what the antichrist is thinking. What is the antichrist's goal? They're trying every means possible to suppress, belittle, and put themselves above other people. This is how an antichrist treats everyone who pursues the truth or works with them. ... In addition to these evil deeds, antichrists do something even more despicable, which is that they always try to figure out how to gain leverage over those who pursue the truth. For example, if some people have fornicated or committed some other transgression, antichrists seize on these as leverage to attack them, look for opportunities to insult, expose, and slander them, label them to**

discourage their enthusiasm for performing their duties so that they feel negative. Antichrists also cause God's chosen people to discriminate against them, shun them, and reject them, so that those who pursue the truth are isolated. In the end, when all those who pursue the truth feel negative and weak, no longer actively perform their duties, and are unwilling to attend gatherings, the goal of antichrists is achieved. Since those who pursue the truth no longer pose a threat to their status and power, and no one dares to report or expose them anymore, antichrists can feel at ease. ... In summary, based on these manifestations of antichrists, we may determine that they are not performing the duty of leadership, because they are not leading people in eating and drinking God's words or fellowshiping about the truth, and they are not watering or sustaining people, allowing them to obtain the truth. Instead, they disrupt and disturb church life, dismantle and destroy the work of the church, and impede people on the path of pursuing the truth and obtaining salvation. They want to lead God's chosen people astray and cause them to lose the chance to be granted salvation. This is the ultimate goal that antichrists want to achieve by disrupting and disturbing the work of the church" (The Word, Vol. 4. Exposing Antichrists. Item Three: They Exclude and Attack Those Who Pursue the Truth). This passage of God's words really struck me where it hurt. God exposes how antichrists suppress and exclude their dissenters, finding fault in and disparaging those that pursue the truth, in order to solidify their own status. Wasn't that just how I was treating Chen Shi? During the election, when I saw how everyone thought favorably of her, I remembered when we worked together before, how the others all accepted her ideas most of the time and she got all the attention instead of me. She'd always pointed out my faults, too, making me lose face. I worried that if she were elected again, it would be

the same as before—the brothers and sisters would only listen to and admire her, and no one would listen to me anymore. So, when a co-worker said Chen Shi could bear a burden, and when another sister thought of voting for her, I felt a sense of crisis and did all I could to deny her strengths, making a big deal of her previous instances of corruption. I said she didn't have much life experience and didn't pursue the truth, trying to make everyone develop bias against her so they wouldn't vote for her. When the leader noticed my issue and pruned me for treating Chen Shi unfairly, I saw that I hadn't got what I wanted, after which I became unreasonable, wanting to abandon my duty. Everything I said was full of cunning and ulterior motives. It was all to protect my pride and status. How was that any different from antichrists who, in order to solidify their status, attack those that pursue the truth? Now, there was an urgent need for people to cooperate in the work of the church; even though Chen Shi had shown signs of corruption and had deficiencies, she had a sense of justice and bore a burden in her duty. She sought the truth when faced with issues and was someone who pursued the truth, so she met the qualifications of a leader. But I'd worried that she'd threaten my status in the eyes of the others, so I had done everything I could to disparage and exclude her, without the slightest consideration for the work of the church. I hadn't been at all considerate of God's intentions—in what way was I doing my duty? I was disturbing and disrupting the church's work; I was doing evil! Having realized this, I suddenly felt how truly appalling I'd been. In the past, I'd always thought excluding and punishing people were the acts of an antichrist, but now I realized that I, too, had an antichrist disposition and was walking the path of an antichrist. If I didn't repent, I would only be spurned and eliminated by God. Coming to this realization, I felt horrified, but I also understood that being pruned and revealed was my opportunity to

reflect and repent. I needed to seek the truth to resolve my corrupt disposition, and properly cooperate with Chen Shi to do the church's work well and make up for past regrets.

After that, I opened up to my brothers and sisters about my corruption so they could have discernment toward my prior statements about Chen Shi and treat her properly. I stopped excluding and resisting Chen Shi when I saw her, and actively asked and cared about her state, discussed work and collaborated with her. Gradually, we started to get along much better with each other, and I felt much more at ease. In particular, during gatherings, when Chen Shi spoke very practically about her experience and understanding, I felt even greater shame, then—I'd almost cost my sister this opportunity to practice as a leader. I had almost done evil.

Later on, I continued to seek the truth and reflect on myself. I came across this passage of God's words: **"Antichrists' cherishment of their reputation and status goes beyond that of normal people, and is something within their disposition essence; it is not a temporary interest, or the transient effect of their surroundings—it is something within their life, their bones, and so it is their essence. This is to say that in everything antichrists do, their first consideration is their own reputation and status, nothing else. For antichrists, reputation and status are their life, and their lifelong goal. In all they do, their first consideration is: 'What will happen to my status? And to my reputation? Will doing this give me a good reputation? Will it elevate my status in people's minds?' That is the first thing they think about, which is ample proof that they have the disposition and essence of antichrists; they would not consider these problems otherwise. ... Although antichrists also believe in God, they see the pursuit of reputation and status as equivalent to faith in God and give it equal**

weight. Which is to say, as they walk the path of faith in God, they also pursue their own reputation and status. It can be said that in antichrists' hearts, they believe that pursuit of the truth in their faith in God is the pursuit of reputation and status; the pursuit of reputation and status is also the pursuit of the truth, and to gain reputation and status is to gain the truth and life. If they feel that they have no reputation, gains, or status, that no one admires them, or esteems them, or follows them, then they are very disappointed, they believe there is no point in believing in God, no value to it, and they say to themselves, 'Is such faith in god a failure? Is it hopeless?' They often deliberate such things in their hearts, they deliberate how they can carve a place out for themselves in the house of God, how they can have a lofty reputation in the church, so that people listen when they talk, and support them when they act, and follow them wherever they go; so that they have the final say in the church, and fame, gain, and status—they really focus on such things in their hearts. These are what such people pursue” (The Word, Vol. 4. Exposing Antichrists. Item Nine (Part Three)). God exposes how antichrists treasure reputation and status, and how everything they do serves their pursuit of power. They want everyone to obey them and to have a place for them in their hearts. In essence, they do all this to establish their own independent kingdom and to vie with God for people—to make people worship them. I saw how my manifestations were just like those that God exposed. I was always trying to protect my image in the eyes of others, seeking status and to have the last word. I wanted to be the center of everyone's attention. When someone more talented than me came along, I saw them as a threat to my status, and would attack and exclude them. That's exactly how I treated Chen Shi. Worrying that I wouldn't be able to distinguish myself if she were chosen to be leader, I made a big deal of her

past corruptions to mislead the others into not voting for her. I even hoped that a new partner would be elected. That way, given that I had been a leader for much longer, no matter what I said or did, even if it didn't accord with principle, my new partner wouldn't see things clearly and wouldn't expose or criticize me. I would then be the top dog at the church, whatever I said would go, and I could do whatever I wanted. My ambitions and desires were completely out of hand—I was in grave danger! To maintain their autocratic rule, the CCP only permits people to follow them and submit to them. They absolutely prohibit people from believing in and following God, and those who do believe will be viciously arrested and persecuted. I, as well, could even suppress and exclude people to safeguard my own status. I simply couldn't believe how awful I'd become for the sake of status. As a church leader, I should work together with those that pursue the truth, united in heart and mind, to do the work of the church well, and bring the brothers and sisters before God. But all I would think of was reputation and status—I had no room in my heart for the work of the church or the life entry of my brothers and sisters, and I had no God-fearing heart whatsoever. I had believed in God for years, yet I still suppressed my sister for the sake of my status. What I did truly disgusted God!

I realized there was another reason I had suppressed and excluded Chen Shi: She had kept criticizing me, exposing me, and making me lose face. I found the following passage of God's words regarding this state: **“What should you do if you wish to give the path of an antichrist a wide berth? You should take the initiative to draw close to people who love the truth, people who are upright, get close to people who can point out your issues, who can speak truthfully and reproach you when they discover your problems, and especially people who can prune you when they discover your problems—these are the people who are most**

beneficial to you, and you should cherish them. If you exclude and get rid of such good people, then you will lose God's protection, and disaster will gradually come to you. By getting close to good people and people who understand the truth, you will have peace and joy, and you will be able to keep disaster at bay; by getting close to vile people, shameless people, and people who flatter you, you will be in danger. Not only will you be easily duped and tricked, but disaster may come upon you at any time. You must know what kind of person can benefit you the most—it is those who can warn you when you do something wrong, or when you exalt and testify about yourself and mislead others, that can benefit you the most. Getting close to such people is the correct path to take. Are you capable of this? If someone says something that damages your reputation and you spend the rest of your life resenting them, saying, 'Why did you expose me? I've never mistreated you. Why do you always have to make things difficult for me?' and you bear a grudge in your heart, a rift opens up, and you always think, 'I'm a leader, I have this identity and status, and I won't allow you to speak that way,' then what kind of manifestation is this? It is not accepting the truth and setting yourself in opposition to others; it is being somewhat deaf to reason. Isn't this your thought of status stirring up trouble? This shows that your corrupt dispositions are too severe. Those who always harbor thoughts of status are people with a severe antichrist disposition. If they also commit evil, then they will very quickly be revealed and eliminated. It is so dangerous for people to reject and not accept the truth! Always having the desire to vie for status and wanting to covet the benefits of status are signs of danger. When one's heart is always constrained by status, can one still practice the truth and handle things according to principle? If one is unable to

put the truth into practice and always acts for the sake of fame, gain, and status, and always uses their power to do things, then aren't they an obvious antichrist showing their true colors?" (The Word, Vol. 4. Exposing Antichrists. Item Four: They Exalt and Testify About Themselves). Reading God's words, I realized the brothers and sisters weren't exposing and criticizing me to make fun of, disparage or embarrass me, but to help me come to know myself. This would be beneficial to my life and would ensure I didn't go down the wrong path. I thought back to when Chen Shi and I had collaborated, and she had exposed me directly after noticing I was being arrogant, conceited and acting arbitrarily. That was the loving help that she'd given me. Having someone like that by my side to supervise me was beneficial to my growth in life. But, at the time, I didn't accept it from God and constantly felt like she was making me lose face by criticizing and exposing me in front of others, so I developed a bias toward her and excluded her. These were all manifestations of my antichrist disposition. God's words had given me a path of practice: I should spend more time with honest, forthright people that pursue the truth, and when I did something wrong and went against principle, I should abandon my status and pride and listen to their thoughts. In this way, I could avoid doing evil. I thought of how, even though I was a leader, I still lacked insight into many issues and was under the control of my corrupt disposition, and therefore I couldn't avoid causing some disruption and disturbance in my duty. Only by working harmoniously with others and engaging in mutual help and support would I be able to do my duty and carry out church work well. After I understood God's intention, I opened up to Chen Shi and apologized to her, telling her the whole story of how I'd attacked and suppressed her. Hearing that, she fellowshiped on her own experience to help me. By

opening up and fellowshiping we were able to remove the barrier between us.

There was a time when I had neglected the work of general affairs because I was busy with other work. Sister Yang Yanyi, who was in charge of that work, didn't mince words in criticizing me, "You haven't had a gathering with us for two months, you haven't resolved the difficulties we've had in our duties, and our lives have been negatively affected. God's words say false leaders and workers assign work and then don't follow up on it, so aren't you a false leader?" Hearing the sister say this, I refused to accept it, and justified things to myself: "I've asked about your state these two months, just not that often. And also, it's because I've been busy with other work. You can't call me a false leader just because of that. With you being like this, how do I dare to follow up on your work in the future? If you catch me doing something wrong again, and go to the upper-level leaders to report and inform on me as a false leader, won't I lose my status? This won't do, I can't let you oversee work in the future." But then, I thought of how I'd attacked and excluded Chen Shi before, and here I was again not wanting to let Yanyi oversee work after she voiced her opinion about me. Wasn't I still attacking and excluding those with differing views? I recalled a passage of God's words: **"You must get close to people who can speak truthfully to you; having people like this beside you is greatly to your advantage. In particular, having such good people around you as those who, when they discover a problem with you, have the courage to reproach you and expose you, can prevent you from going astray. They don't care what your status is, and the moment they discover that you have done something against the truth principles, then they will reproach and expose you if necessary. Only such people are upright people, people with a sense of justice, and no matter how they expose**

and reproach you, it is all of help to you, and it is all about supervising you and pushing you forward. You must draw close to such people; having such people beside you, helping you, you become relatively much safer—this is what it is to have God’s protection” (The Word, Vol. 4.

Exposing Antichrists. Item Four: They Exalt and Testify About Themselves). Pondering God’s words, I gradually calmed down. I considered carefully that, although Yanyi had pruned me quite harshly, she had spoken the truth. During those two months, I hadn’t understood or resolved her state and her issues. Her life entry really had been adversely affected. As a church leader, it was my responsibility to keep abreast of the brothers’ and sisters’ states and resolve their difficulties in life entry—I couldn’t shirk my responsibility, no matter how busy I was. But I hadn’t shown any concern for Yanyi. When she’d given me some suggestions, I’d wanted to vengefully attack her because I thought she was damaging my reputation and status, and that if she informed on me my status would be lost. I was truly malicious! When Yanyi pruned me, she was supervising my work and practicing the truth. If I attacked and sought revenge against her, I’d be going against the truth and doing evil. Realizing this, I prayed to God, “Dear God, I’ve realized I have a malicious nature. In order to guard my reputation, I wanted to attack and seek revenge against Yanyi. This is punishing people. Oh God, I no longer wish to act according to my corrupt disposition. I’m ready to practice the truth and accept Yanyi’s suggestions.” After prayer, I felt especially guilty and wanted to apologize, but to my surprise, she apologized to me first, saying she had been a little out of line and had spoken with a corrupt disposition. I also apologized to her: “You were correct to prune me. I really didn’t carry out real work and I ought to reflect on this.” I felt that the brothers and sisters pruning and helping me was so that I could realize that I

hadn't done real work. This came from God and was His protection for me. Thanks be to God!

Through these experiences, I realized I had been deeply corrupted by Satan and was too covetous of reputation and status. When it came to my pride and status, I could even suppress and exclude people. I also realized that no matter what situation we face, we must focus on reflecting upon and knowing ourselves, and on seeking the truth to resolve our corrupt dispositions. Only then can we avoid doing evil and resisting God. Thanks be to God!

13. How Being Perfunctory Harmed Me

By Kristen, Italy

In October 2021, I started practicing watering newcomers. One week in, I realized there was too much I had to learn. I had to familiarize myself with truth principles of all sorts, and I also had to practice fellowshiping on the truth to resolve their various issues and difficulties, but my understanding of the truth was superficial and chatting wasn't my forte. I found it to be a really difficult duty, especially when the team leader wanted me to resolve newcomers' issues and difficulties quickly. All newcomers had quite a few problems, so to resolve them, I had to seek lots of relevant truths, and consider how to fellowship clearly. How much price did I have to pay to do this? I found that all of this was really difficult to achieve, so I told the team leader that I was lacking caliber and couldn't do it well. The team leader fellowshiped with me, saying I needed to bear a burden in my duty and I shouldn't fear suffering. I reluctantly agreed after hearing her fellowship, but in my heart, I didn't want to pay a price. In gatherings, I kept fellowshiping with newcomers like I always had, and because I didn't know their struggles, I'd just ramble on in my fellowship and not achieve results, causing the number of newcomers who attended gatherings regularly to start declining. When the team leader found the problem, she asked me to help and support them right away, but I thought to myself, "The gospel spreaders have already given them lots of fellowship on the truth of visions of God's work, yet they still aren't coming to gatherings. So would my fellowshiping accomplish anything? Besides, all those newcomers haven't been gathering recently, so going to fellowship with them will certainly take lots of time, which will be exhausting." At that thought, I just sent them messages to briefly say hello, and shelved those

who didn't respond, paying them no mind. For those who had more troubles, I put them off to last on my list for fellowship, or just fobbed them off onto gospel spreaders to support. Before long, some newcomers stopped gathering because their issues had been unresolved for so long. I felt guilty and upset whenever I noticed newcomers weren't gathering, and that I should pay more of a price to resolve their issues. But when I thought of what a hassle that would be, I just let it pass.

I remember one newcomer, a former Catholic, who developed notions about God incarnate appearing and working in the last days, and stopped gathering. No matter how I messaged or called her, she just ignored me. Two days later, she left me this message, "I was born into a Catholic family. I've been a Catholic since I was a little girl, and now it's been 64 years. I only believe in the Lord Jesus—I won't believe in Almighty God." My response was, "Almighty God is the Lord Jesus returned. The only way to be saved and enter the kingdom of heaven is to accept the Lord's appearance and work in the last days." Afterward, she didn't respond. I sought her out a few more times, but she still ignored me. So I pushed this problem off onto the team leader. Unexpectedly, she sent me some relevant passages of God's words, asking me to seek the truth to resolve this. Seeing I needed to equip myself with lots of truths and give thought to how to fellowship to achieve results, it all felt so taxing. The newcomer wasn't responding to me and even if I spent time equipping myself, she still might not listen to my fellowship, so I just put her to one side and ignored her. There was a newcomer who was really busy with work every day, and she never had time to attend the gatherings I invited her to. At first, I kept sending her words of God and hymns every day, but each time she'd just respond with an "Amen," and then not show up to gatherings. Eventually, I stopped sending her God's words. I felt like she was too busy with work,

and that this was her real situation, and that no matter how much time I invested, I couldn't solve that problem. Actually, I knew I should arrange suitable gathering times around her difficulties, and then find relevant passages of God's words to fellowship with her on her notions, and that this was the only way to achieve results. But I felt doing this was too complicated and bothersome, so I didn't want to pay this price. However, if I didn't fellowship with her and the leader found out, she'd prune me for not doing real work. So I had to force myself to fellowship with the newcomer a couple of times, and when I saw she still wasn't attending gatherings, I felt she didn't thirst for the truth, and that it wasn't a lack of effort on my part. So I just ended up disregarding her. I'd always been perfunctory in my duty, ducking all hardships. When I encountered newcomers with notions or real hardships, I didn't want to put in the effort of considering how to resolve their issues, and I'd just hand these issues off to the team leader. After a few months, very few newcomers were gathering normally. The leader pruned and exposed me after she discovered this issue. She said I was being too perfunctory in my duty and told me I needed to change right away. So I resolved that I would rebel against my flesh and water the newcomers well. But when faced with newcomers with lots of issues, I was still unwilling to pay a price in resolving their problems. Instead, I'd just find an excuse and say I was lacking caliber and wasn't fit for that duty. Seeing that I remained perfunctory, didn't change, and nothing was coming of my duty, the leader pruned me harshly, saying, "You're too perfunctory in your duty! You never ask about the newcomers' problems, and even when you do learn a bit about them, you don't put effort into resolving them. How is that doing a duty? You're just harming the newcomers! If you don't change you'll be dismissed." Having been pruned

and warned like that, I felt both guilty and afraid. I started to self-reflect: Why couldn't I do this duty well, and I always felt it was too hard?

One day in my devotionals, I read this passage of God's words: **"Some people lack any principles when performing their duty. They consistently follow their own inclinations and act arbitrarily. Is this not a display of perfunctoriness? Are they not deceiving God? Have you ever considered the consequences of such behavior? You show no consideration for God's intentions through your performance of duty. You are thoughtless and inefficient in everything you do, lacking wholehearted dedication and effort. Can you gain God's approval this way? Many people perform their duty reluctantly, and they cannot persevere. They cannot endure even the slightest suffering and they always feel that they have been done a great disservice, nor do they seek the truth to resolve difficulties. Can they follow God to the end by performing their duty in this way? Is it alright to be perfunctory in whatever they do? Can this be acceptable to the conscience? Even measured by human standards, such behavior is unacceptable—so may it be accounted as the satisfactory performance of duty? If you perform your duty in this way, you will never gain the truth. Your laboring will be unsatisfactory. How, then, could you gain God's approval? Many people fear hardship when performing their duty, they are too lazy and crave physical comfort. They never invest any effort into learning specialized skills or contemplating the truths in God's words. They believe that being perfunctory in this way saves them trouble. They don't need to do any research or seek advice from others. They don't need to use their minds or think deeply. This seems to save them a lot of effort and physical discomfort, and they still manage to complete the task. And if you prune them, they become defiant and argue, saying: 'I**

wasn't lazy or idle, the task was done—why are you nitpicking? Aren't you just trying to find fault with me? I'm already doing well enough by performing my duty like this. How are you not satisfied?' Do you think people like this can make any further progress? They consistently perform their duties in a perfunctory manner, and always come up with excuses. When problems arise they refuse to let anyone point them out. What kind of disposition is this? Is it not the disposition of Satan? Can people perform their duty acceptably with such a disposition? Can they satisfy God?" (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. Only One

Who Performs Their Duty Well With All Their Heart, Mind, and Soul Is One Who Loves God). God exposes many people for being too lazy in their duty, always craving carnal comforts, lacking diligence, and being satisfied with the appearance of being busy. They can't ever do their duty well that way. I realized that the reason I wasn't getting results in my duty wasn't because I lacked caliber, but rather because I was just lazy, and afraid of suffering. I felt that watering newcomers meant I had to know lots of truths, that I had to learn to resolve their various problems and difficulties, and that made it a really taxing duty, so I just muddled through it. The team leader wanted me to see to newcomers' issues as soon as possible, and I could have if I'd worked hard. But when I saw this needed more time and effort, I fobbed it off onto the team leader or the gospel spreaders. I'd see newcomers not attending gatherings because they had notions or were facing difficulties and problems, and yet I'd be indifferent. I was unresponsive when others told me of paths of resolution. Sometimes I sent newcomers God's words or hymns, but after a few days I couldn't keep it up, and I'd just disregard them. I saw that I really was lazy, greedy for pleasures of the flesh, and that I wasn't genuine in my duty at all. I was just being deceitful, drifting along in the church. To God, I was so disgusting and hateful!

After that, I read this in God's words: "There are not many opportunities currently to perform a duty, so you must take hold of them when you can. It is precisely when faced with a duty that you must exert yourself; that is when you must offer yourself up, expend yourself for God, and when you are required to pay the price. Do not hold anything back, harbor any schemes, leave any leeway, or give yourself a way out. If you leave any leeway, are calculating, or are wily and treacherous, then you are bound to do a poor job. Suppose you say, 'No one saw me acting in a slick way. How cool!' What kind of thinking is this? Do you think you have pulled the wool over people's eyes, and over God's, too? In actual fact, though, does God know what you have done or not? He knows. In fact, anyone who interacts with you for a while will learn of your corruption and vileness, and though they may not say so outright, they will have their assessments of you in their hearts. There have been many people who were revealed and eliminated because so many others came to understand them. Once everyone saw through to their essence, they exposed those people for who they were and kicked them out. So, whether they pursue the truth or not, people should do their duty well to the best of their ability; they should employ their conscience in doing practical things. You may have defects, but if you can be effective in performing your duty, you will not be eliminated. If you are always thinking that you are fine, that you are sure not to be eliminated, if you still do not reflect or try to know yourself, and you ignore your proper tasks, if you are always perfunctory, then when God's chosen people really do lose their tolerance with you, they will expose you for who you are, and in all likelihood, you will be eliminated. That's because everyone has seen through you and you have lost your dignity and integrity. If no one

trusts you, could God trust you? God scrutinizes man's innermost heart: He absolutely could not trust such a person. ... Trustworthy people are people who have humanity, and people who have humanity are possessed of conscience and reason, and it should be very easy for them to perform their duty well, because they treat their duty as their obligation. People without conscience or reason are bound to perform their duty poorly, and they have no sense of responsibility toward their duty no matter what it is. Others always have to worry over them, supervise them, and ask about their progress; if not, things could go awry while performing their duty, and things could go wrong while performing a task, which would be more trouble than it's worth. In short, people always need to examine themselves when performing their duties, 'Have I adequately fulfilled this duty? Did I put my heart into it? Or did I just muddle through it?' If you are always perfunctory, you're in danger. At the very least, it means you have no credibility, and that people cannot trust you. More seriously, if you always just go through the motions when doing your duty, and if you always deceive God, then you are in great danger! What are the consequences of being knowingly deceitful? Everyone can see that you are knowingly transgressing, that you are living according to nothing but your own corrupt disposition, that you are nothing but perfunctory, that you do not practice the truth at all—which means you are devoid of humanity! If this is manifested in you throughout, if you avoid major mistakes but are unceasing in the minor ones, and unrepentant from start to finish, then you are an evil person, a disbeliever, and should be cleared out. Such consequences are heinous—you are completely revealed and eliminated as a disbeliever and evil person” (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. Life Entry Begins With the

Performance of Duty). **“How you regard God’s commissions is extremely important, and this is a very serious matter. If you cannot complete what God has entrusted to people, then you are not fit to live in His presence and you should be punished. It is perfectly natural and justified that humans should complete whatever commissions God entrusts to them. This is man’s supreme responsibility, and is just as important as their very lives. If you do not take God’s commissions seriously, then you are betraying Him in the most grievous way. In this, you are more lamentable than Judas, and should be cursed”** (The Word,

Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. How to Know Man’s Nature). Faced with the exposure of God’s words, I could feel His disgust and wrath for those who are perfunctory in their duty. They lack conscience, reason, integrity, and dignity, and are completely untrustworthy. If they remain unrepentant, they are evil people, disbelievers, and should be eliminated. Watering newcomers is an important job. They’ve just accepted God’s new work, and they need more watering to put down roots in the true way, so Satan won’t capture them. Furthermore, no one who accepts God’s work does it so easily or smoothly: It’s all through God’s enlightenment and guidance and a number of brothers and sisters paying a price to water, provide for, sustain and help them. Only then can they be brought before God. As a waterer, watering newcomers was my responsibility. Especially when I saw newcomers with difficulties, I should have had a sense of urgency and found ways to resolve these issues. But instead, I shirked the hard jobs and was slippery. When I saw the newcomers facing difficulties, I’d always choose the problems that were easy to resolve, and set difficult issues aside and ignore them. Even worse, I was clearly being slippery and irresponsible in my duty, causing some newcomers to not attend gatherings and even drop out, but I shirked responsibility by saying that they didn’t thirst for the

truth, or that I lacked caliber and couldn't solve their problems to deceive others and exonerate myself for being perfunctory. Wasn't I doing my duty just like how a nonbeliever works for their boss? I was playing tricks, muddling through my days, without any awareness of conscience. After all my years of faith, I still attempted to fool and cheat God without even batting an eyelid. I was so cunning and deceitful! I didn't have any humanity at all. Back when I first accepted God's gospel of the last days, I was busy with work every day, and my parents were obstructing my faith. I felt really stressed and even thought about giving up on gatherings. But the brothers and sisters patiently fellowshiped the truth with me time after time and set up gatherings to fit my schedule. Sometimes I couldn't attend because I was too busy with work, so brothers and sisters rode long distances on their bikes to fellowship God's word with me, to help and support me. And slowly, I learned about God's work, and saw that the only way to be saved is to pursue the truth. I then became willing to attend gatherings and take on a duty. The church always emphasizes that watering newcomers requires patience and great consideration for their difficulties, that we have to help them with love and encourage them to attend gatherings so they can put down roots in the true way as soon as possible. I saw that God is full of love and mercy for us, and that He saves us to the greatest extent possible. He's incredibly conscientious toward every single person who investigates the true way. He won't give up if there's even a shred of hope. But I was so cold and had no sense of responsibility toward newcomers. I didn't care at all about their life entry, which meant their problems weren't getting resolved promptly, and that some didn't want to attend gatherings anymore. Based on my behavior, how was that doing a duty at all? I was just doing evil, trying to fool and cheat God! I felt so

guilty when I realized this and I hated myself for being so lacking in humanity.

I read this passage of God's words later: **"Are you content to live under the influence of Satan, with peace and joy, and a little fleshly comfort? Are you not the lowliest of all people? None are more foolish than those who have beheld salvation but do not pursue to gain it; these are people who gorge themselves on the flesh and enjoy Satan. You hope that your faith in God will not entail any challenges or tribulations, or the slightest hardship. You always pursue those things that are worthless, and you attach no value to life, instead putting your own extravagant thoughts before the truth. You are so worthless! You live like a pig—what difference is there between you, and pigs and dogs? Are those who do not pursue the truth, and instead love the flesh, not all beasts? Are those dead ones without spirits not all walking corpses? How many words have been spoken among you? Has only a little work been done among you? How much have I provided among you? So why have you not gained it? What do you have to complain of? Is it not the case that you have gained nothing because you are too in love with the flesh? And is it not because your thoughts are too extravagant? Is it not because you are too stupid? If you are incapable of gaining these blessings, can you blame God for not saving you? ... I give you the true way without asking for anything in return, yet you do not pursue. Are you one of those who believe in God? I bestow real human life upon you, yet you do not pursue. Are you no different from a pig or a dog? Pigs do not pursue the life of man, they do not pursue being cleansed, and they do not understand what life is. Each day, after eating their fill, they simply sleep. I have given you the true way, yet you have not gained it: You are empty-handed. Are you willing to**

continue in this life, the life of a pig? What is the significance of such people being alive? Your life is contemptible and ignoble, you live amid filth and licentiousness, and you do not pursue any goals; is your life not the most ignoble of all? Do you have the gall to look upon God? If you continue to experience in this way, will you not acquire nothing? The true way has been given to you, but whether or not you can ultimately gain it depends on your own personal pursuit” (The Word, Vol. 1.

The Appearance and Work of God. The Experiences of Peter: His Knowledge of Chastisement and Judgment). Reading the reprimanding words of God, I felt such guilt and self-reproach. To cleanse and transform our corrupt dispositions, to give us a chance at salvation, God has earnestly provided for us with so many truths, and He has fellowshiped in great detail on every aspect of the truth, afraid we won't understand it. God has paid such a great price in His efforts for us. Anyone with humanity should put effort into pursuing the truth and be loyal to their duty. But I was totally lacking in conscience. I wasn't pursuing the truth at all, I only cared about physical comfort, and was still just living by satanic philosophies, like “Live life on autopilot,” and “Life is short, so enjoy it while you can.” I took these satanic philosophies as words of wisdom to live by, thinking that we had to treat ourselves well in the few decades we had on earth, and not strain ourselves too much, and that we had to make our lives carefree and happy. I was doing a duty under the condition that I wouldn't suffer carnal discomfort or weariness. I did whatever was easiest. Any time I had to rack my brains about something, I became resistant and ran away, either pushing the problem off onto someone else or shelving and ignoring it. I wasn't taking my duty seriously at all, so some newcomers' issues weren't resolved and they stopped attending gatherings. It was only then that I saw that those satanic philosophies had made me more and more depraved. I craved comfort all

day and didn't pursue the truth at all, made a mess of my duty, and wasn't even being remotely concerned about it. I was neglecting my duties, not gaining the truths I should have gained, and not fulfilling my responsibilities. Was I not a complete good-for-nothing? I really experienced that craving carnal comfort was harming myself and ruining my chance at salvation. Encountering difficulties in a duty is actually a good chance to lean on God and seek the truth. Difficulties forcing me to seek the truth and learn to follow principles in my duty were good channels for me to pursue the truth and life entry. But I was treating these things like a nuisance, a burden to be shrugged off. Realizing that, I really regretted how I'd coddled my flesh, and lost so many good chances to understand the truth. I didn't want to keep muddling through. I had to rebel against the flesh and put my heart into my duty.

One day I read a passage of God's words that exposes false leaders, which made me better understand the consequences of being perfunctory in my duty. God's words say: **"Say there is a job that could be completed in one month by one person. If it takes six months to do this job, do the expenditures of the remaining five months not constitute a loss? Let Me give an example about preaching the gospel. Say that a person is willing to investigate the true way and could probably be won over in just one month, after which they would enter the church and continue to receive watering and provision, and within six months they could establish a foundation. But if the attitude the person preaching the gospel takes toward this matter is one of disregard and perfunctoriness, and the leaders and workers also ignore their responsibilities, and it ends up taking half a year to win that person over, will this half a year not constitute a loss to their life? If they encounter the great disasters and they have not yet laid down a foundation on the true way, they will be**

in danger, and will those people not have failed them then? Such a loss cannot be measured with money or material things. Those people will have held up that person's understanding of the truth by half a year; they will have delayed them in establishing a foundation and in starting to do their duty by half a year. Who will take responsibility for this? Can the leaders and workers afford to take responsibility for this? No one can afford to bear the responsibility for holding up someone's life"

(The Word, Vol. 5. The Responsibilities of Leaders and Workers. The Responsibilities of Leaders and Workers (4)). God's words made me feel ashamed and remorseful. I was just like a false leader who didn't do real work, was remiss in my duty and irresponsible, causing newcomers to not gather, and some to even leave the faith because their issues weren't resolved. Wasn't watering newcomers that way just harming them? Even though some didn't leave the faith, their lives suffered losses because they held onto notions and didn't gather for a long time. Those are losses I have no way of making up for. If I had not cared so much about my flesh, been able to pay a price, and had treated each newcomer's problems seriously, then maybe some of them would have been able to understand the truth and put down roots in the true way earlier, live a life of the church, do a duty, accumulate good deeds sooner, and things wouldn't have turned out as they did. But at that point, it was too late for words. I felt really upset and guilty, and incredibly indebted to God. That was a transgression, a stain I'd left on my duty! I was filled with regret and fear, too. I felt like I'd caused huge problems. In tears, I prayed, "God, I always covet ease and I'm perfunctory in my duty, which disgusts You. I want to repent to You. Please scrutinize my heart. If I continue to be perfunctory, please chasten and discipline me."

I then listed the newcomers who were negative, weak, and not attending gatherings, and looked for relevant words of God to resolve their

issues. I also asked sisters who were good at watering about principles and approaches. Later on, I sought out the newcomer with religious notions, who wasn't gathering. I sent her a number of messages, none of which she responded to. I was feeling kind of deflated and thought that I should forget about it. Anyway she was the one who stopped responding—this much was true. I then sent the newcomer who was busy with work another message, and when I saw her turn down my gathering invite, I didn't want to pay any further price in supporting her. At that moment, I thought of my prayer to God, as well as these words of His: **“When people perform their duty, they are, in fact, doing what they ought to do. If you do it before God, if you perform your duty and submit to God with an attitude of honesty and with heart, will this attitude not be far more correct? So how should you apply this attitude to your everyday life? You must make ‘worshiping God with heart and honesty’ your reality. Whenever you want to be slack and just go through the motions, whenever you want to act in a slippery way and be lazy, and whenever you get distracted or would rather be enjoying yourself, you should consider: ‘In behaving like this, am I being untrustworthy? Is this putting my heart into doing my duty? Am I being disloyal by doing this? In doing this, am I failing to live up to the commission God has entrusted to me?’ This is how you should self-reflect. If you come to find out that you are always perfunctory in your duty, that you are disloyal, and that you have hurt God, what should you do? You should say, ‘In the moment I sensed that there was something wrong here, but I didn’t treat it as a problem; I just glossed over it carelessly. I didn’t realize until now that I really had been perfunctory, that I had not lived up to my responsibility. I truly am lacking in conscience and reason!’ You have found the problem and come to know a bit about yourself—so now, you must turn yourself**

around! Your attitude toward performing your duty was wrong. You were careless with it, as with an extra job, and you did not put your heart into it. If you are perfunctory like this again, you must pray to God and let Him discipline and chasten you. You must have such a will in performing your duty. Only then can you truly repent. You may turn yourself around only when your conscience is clear and your attitude toward performing your duty is transformed” (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. Only in the Frequent Reading of God’s Words and Contemplation of the Truth Is There a Way Ahead). God’s words helped me see that doing a duty well isn’t hard, that we must be honest, accept God’s scrutiny, and do our utmost to carry out what we know, what we can, not use trickery or be perfunctory, and that we need this type of attitude to do our duty well. So I resolved that this time I wouldn’t disappoint God again. Even if those newcomers didn’t attend gatherings after my help and support, I’d still have fulfilled my responsibility, and be without regrets.

I went to talk to another sister seeking a path of practice and I also sought out that newcomer with religious notions for fellowship. I opened up to her about my own experiences of faith. To my surprise, she responded to my messages. She actually really enjoyed the gatherings, but had a few unresolved notions and confusions. I was really stirred by this newcomer’s heartfelt words and I shared fellowship directed at her notions. In the end, she agreed to attend gatherings and before long, she took on a duty. I had this indescribable feeling when I saw how things turned out that way. I felt both joy and remorse. Without the enlightenment and illumination of God’s words that allowed me to know myself and changed my attitude toward my duty, I would have committed another transgression. After that, I sought out the newcomer who was busy with work again. Before, I’d always been pushing her to attend gatherings without considering her difficulties. This

time, I fellowshiped on God's words to help her based on her actual situation, and adjusted gathering times appropriately. When she didn't have time for a gathering, I'd read God's words with her when she had free time, and patiently shared fellowship with her. Then she became willing to open up her heart to me and talk about God's words she'd read. She also told me happily that no matter what, she wouldn't just give up on gathering, or eating and drinking God's words. After that, she never missed another gathering, and no matter how busy her work was, she devoted time to pondering God's words. With this kind of support and help for the newcomers, some of them became willing to attend gatherings again. Once I corrected my attitude, leaned on God, and put genuine effort in, I got better results in my duty.

I was always being slippery and perfunctory in my duty before. Though I wasn't physically suffering, I was always living in difficulty. I couldn't receive God's guidance, I was accomplishing less and less in my duty, and I always worried that God would abandon me and eliminate me. I was so depressed and in pain. Once I put my heart into my duty, I could feel God's presence and guidance. I also made progress in my duty and gained a sense of peace and steadiness. I truly experienced how important our attitude toward duty is. When facing difficulties, only by paying a real price and considering God's intention can we gain the Holy Spirit's enlightenment and guidance and do our duty effectively.

14. A Day Never to Be Forgotten

By Li Qing, China

One morning in December 2012, shortly after 9 a.m., I was spreading the gospel with some brothers and sisters when a police car pulled up in front of us. Without showing any ID, an officer twisted my arms and shoved me into his car. Another sister and a brother were also put in the car. My heart was racing and I didn't know what the police planned to do with me. I thought to myself, "What if I can't take the torture, become a Judas and betray God?" I hurriedly prayed to God, asking Him to protect my heart and vowing that I'd die before becoming a Judas and betraying my brothers and sisters. After prayer, I didn't feel as nervous.

When we got to the police station, we were separated and interrogated individually. One of the police harshly questioned me, "Who is your leader? Where do you live?" I said, "I don't know who the leader is. I haven't broken any laws, why was I arrested?" They howled with laughter and said, "What do you know about law? Did you get permission from the central government to spread the gospel? Did the Religious Affairs Bureau give you the OK? You were doing illegal missionary work and disturbing public order. We should send you to the Religious Affairs Bureau and have them deal with you!" Another officer said, "As long as you cooperate with us, we'll let you go." I just ignored them. Then an officer that was standing by the entrance ran into the room and kicked me hard on my right calf. It hurt so much that I thought the bones in my calf had broken. He kicked me so hard that he fell to the ground and the other officers started to laugh. He stood up and took out his anger on me by slapping me in the face. He hit me so hard that I saw stars, and I felt so dizzy that I almost fell over. Soon after, the right side of my face started to swell up. He then stomped hard on my

right calf again, kicking me into a corner of the room. Then he aggressively prepared to kick me in my lower back. I was very scared. What if he kicked me and injured my lower back? I started to cry. Just then, a few of the other officers held him back. Another officer addressed me in a gentler tone, saying, "Listen, sweetie, we don't want to treat you like this. All you have to do is tell us your address, and we'll let you go." I thought to myself, "My parents both believe in God and are doing duties. If I tell them my address, my parents will get drawn into this too. If the brothers and sisters happen to be gathering at my house and are all arrested, I'll have committed evil." So I didn't say anything. Then one of the officers told everyone else to leave because he wanted to speak with me alone. He asked me, "Do you want to get out of here? If you do, just tell us your address. Or you can cooperate with us, and become our informant. Infiltrate the top ranks of the church for us, and we'll work together. As long as you agree, we'll let you go." When he saw that I was ignoring him, he seemed to have another idea and said, "It's only the two of us in here now. I know you probably can't point out other members to their faces, so I can hide your identity. We'll take my car out on the road, you can sit inside the car, and all you have to do is point with your finger at one of your brothers and sisters. As long as you point out another member to replace you, we'll let you go. What do you say?" Seeing that officer's ugly face, I felt disgusted. I thought to myself, "It might just be the two of us in here, but God's Spirit scrutinizes all things. You can fool other people, but you can never fool God. If you think I'm going to become an informant, sell out my brothers and sisters and betray God, you can think again!" I firmly replied, "I don't know anyone!" He then threatened me saying, "Are you trying to protect someone? Do your parents believe in God too? The people arrested with you already told us all about you. We know everything we need to know about you. I'm giving

you an opportunity here to come clean. If you don't tell us anything, you won't have it nearly as easy in prison. They'll force you to drink hot pepper water, clamp your fingers with bamboo sticks, insert needles under your fingernails, stick bamboo skewers in your ears and tell the other inmates to bully you. It'll be like a living hell!" His description sent shivers down my spine, and I was absolutely terrified. I thought to myself, "Did they really sell me out? If the police really stick bamboo skewers in my ears, won't I go deaf? Clamping my fingers with bamboo sticks, sticking needles under my nails—the fingers are really sensitive, that must be incredibly painful! If they sent me to prison and tortured me, could a skinny, little girl like me really withstand all that? Or would I die in there? I'm only 20 years old, and my life is just beginning. I don't want to die yet! Maybe I could just tell them something trivial to satisfy their demands." At this point, I felt uneasy and knew clearly in my heart, "Being arrested and persecuted is a test for me. If I just tell them a little, they'll be sure to ask more follow-up questions. If they're this cruel to a little girl like me, who knows how brutal they'll be with my brothers and sisters! I can't betray my conscience and only think of myself. I can't become Satan's lackey and betray God. Whether or not the other sisters and brothers betrayed me, I must stand firm. Even if it means going to prison and being tortured, I cannot betray God."

After that, no matter how they interrogated me, I always said I didn't know. One of the officers got so angry that he slammed the table and yelled, "I guess we're going to have to do this the hard way!" Then another officer put me in handcuffs, grabbed hold of my hair and tugged back hard. Then three or four other officers piled on and started punching and kicking me. They kicked my calves especially and punched me in the head, stomach and lower back. One of the officers punched me so hard in the stomach that I

curled up in a ball in the corner of the room and started crying. An officer asked me, “So, are you gonna talk now?” I glared at him. Another officer picked me up by the collar, bashed my head against the wall and a metal cabinet and choked me around the neck. It was so painful that I could barely breathe. It was only when I looked like I was about to go under that the officer beside me told him to stop. I collapsed on the floor, gasping for air. I thought about how the police don’t dare go after the evil people in our society, but when it comes to us believers, they’ll unscrupulously torture, beat and even kill us. I cried out in my heart, “Is there any justice in this world? How do they call themselves ‘people’s police’?” Just then, I recalled a hymn of God’s words titled **“Those in Darkness Should Rise Up”**:

1 For thousands of years this has been the land of filth. It is unbearably dirty, misery abounds, ghosts run rampant everywhere, tricking and deceiving, making groundless accusations, being ruthless and vicious, trampling this ghost town and leaving it littered with dead bodies; the stench of decay covers the land and pervades the air, and it is heavily guarded. Who can see the world beyond the skies? How could the people of a ghost town such as this ever have seen God? Have they ever enjoyed the dearness and loveliness of God? What appreciation have they of the matters of the human world? Who of them can understand God’s eager intentions?

2 Why put up such an impenetrable obstacle to the work of God? Why employ various tricks to deceive God’s folk? Where is the true freedom and the legitimate rights and interests? Where is the fairness? Where is the comfort? Where is the warmth? Why use deceitful schemes to trick God’s people? Why use force to suppress the coming of God? Why hound God until He has nowhere to rest His head? Why

do you reject the arrival of God? Why are you so unconscionable? Are you willing to endure the injustices in a dark society such as this?

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—The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. Work and Entry (8)

In the past, I didn't have any discernment of the CCP. In their textbooks, the CCP claimed to support freedom of religion, and so I believed them without questioning, even singing their praises. Only after being persecuted by the CCP did I see them for what they really are. The CCP claims they support religious freedom in order to deceive the people, but in reality they are wildly resisting God and persecuting Christians. Almighty God has come to express the truth and save mankind from Satan's corruption and torment, from Satan's dark influence, and guide us onto the right path in life. This is an incredible thing, but the CCP persecutes us and orders officers to specifically arrest and brutalize believers in God. The CCP is truly evil! It is a God-hating, God-resisting demon!

They then got me handcuffed for half an hour, twisting my right arm back over my shoulder and yanking my left arm up from behind, and made me stand in a squat or kneel on my knees. When I didn't kneel, two officers grabbed my arms, and a third officer used his knee to bend my leg, forcing me to kneel down. I was tortured to the point of exhaustion and knelt on the ground facing the wall. I thought about how they wouldn't let me go easily if they didn't get some information on the church from me. I'd only been in there for two hours and I'd already been tortured to the point of exhaustion and full-body pain. I wondered how much torture there was still in store for me and if I'd be able to take it. I felt like a little sheep that had suddenly come upon a pack of wolves and might be devoured at any time. I was very upset and scared. I continually prayed to God in my heart, "Dear God, I feel

very weak in my heart. I don't know how much longer I can hold out. Oh God, this situation has come with Your permission, but I don't understand what Your intention is. Please guide me." Just then, a line of God's words came to mind: **"It is only from within your faith that you will be able to see God, and when you have faith God will perfect you"** (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. Those Who Are to Be Made Perfect Must Undergo Refinement). It was suddenly all clear to me. God hoped that I would keep my faith in Him while experiencing persecution and hardship. I sang this hymn **"Trials Call for Faith"** in my head:

1 While undergoing trials, it is normal for people to be weak, or to have negativity within them, or to lack clarity on God's intentions or their path for practice. But in any case, you must have faith in God's work, and not deny God, just like Job. Although Job was weak and cursed the day of his own birth, he did not deny that all things in human life were bestowed by Jehovah, and that Jehovah is also the One to take them all away. No matter what trials he was put through, he maintained this belief.

2 In your experience, no matter what refinement you undergo through God's words, what God requires of mankind, in brief, is their faith and their God-loving heart. What He perfects by working in this way is people's faith, love, and aspirations. God does the work of perfection on people, and they cannot see it, cannot feel it; under such circumstances, your faith is required. People's faith is required when something cannot be seen by the naked eye, and your faith is required when you cannot let go of your own notions. When you do not have clarity about God's work, what is required of you is to have faith and to take a firm stance and stand strong in your testimony. When Job reached this point, God appeared to him and spoke to him. That is, it is

only from within your faith that you will be able to see God, and when you have faith God will perfect you.

—The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. Those Who Are to Be Made Perfect
Must Undergo Refinement

After singing the hymn silently, my face was covered in tears. I thought about how Job went through his trial, losing his children and all his possessions, and breaking out in boils all over his body, and he experienced extreme physical and emotional suffering. Faced with this trial, Job was initially unclear about God's intention, and he felt incredibly anguished and upset, but he had a God-fearing heart. He didn't chase after the burglars or complain. He first came before God, praying to and seeking Him. Finally he said, "Jehovah gave, and Jehovah has taken away; blessed be the name of Jehovah" (Job 1:21), bearing a resounding testimony. Through this, I realized God's intention. God is using these situations to perfect my faith. I should learn from the story of Job and have faith in God, pray to God and rely upon Him to stand firm in my witness.

After making me kneel for more than 10 minutes, the police ordered me to stand up. A tall officer grabbed my hair and yanked my head upward so that only the tips of my toes touched the ground. The pain felt like my scalp had been ripped from my head. Then he started grinding and crushing my left toes with his shoes, and standing on the insteps of my feet with all his weight. It hurt so much that I thought the bones in my feet might be broken and so I pushed him away. He saw how much it was hurting me and so he stood on the insteps of my feet again. My legs started shaking and I automatically crouched down, but he pulled me back up, put my hands up against the wall and continued to stand on my feet. That was the first time I thought that I'd rather die than endure this pain. It was only when my left foot made a brittle cracking sound that he finally stopped. I thought the

bones in my foot were broken, but really it was just fine. I knew that God was caring for and protecting me. I thanked God from the bottom of my heart. Then an officer who looked to be over 20 years old came in and seductively asked me, "How old are you? Do you have a boyfriend? If you don't want to talk, that's fine. But the sooner you talk, the sooner we'll let you go. And at night I'll come see you." Then he came up close to me and said, "What kind of things do you think a boy and girl would do all alone in an empty room?" He said a lot of other very dirty and indecent things to me. Then a female officer came in and said with an icy smile, "If she doesn't talk, just rip off all her clothes and make her stand naked in a crowded intersection with a sign around her neck so everyone can see her. Then post her naked pictures online and see if she'll still dare to go out in public. She'll be shamed for life!" As she spoke, she undid my handcuffs and started taking off my down coat. I was very scared. I thought that she might have some sympathy for me as a woman, but it turned out she was just as evil as the male officers. Another male officer started rubbing his hand on my waist and said, "You've got a pretty nice body." The other officers all broke out in lewd laughter. The sound of their laughter seemed like it came up straight from hell. I was so scared that I was almost in tears, thinking, "There is nothing these officers won't do. If they really stripped off all of my clothing, how could I live on in such shame? It would be better to die than to have to live in such humiliation." I saw that there was no guardrail on the window in front of the table, and I thought about jumping out of it. When they noticed I was thinking of jumping out, they locked the window, and so I banged my head on the wall as hard as I could. An officer pressed me up against the wall so I couldn't move. He angrily yelled, "You want to die? We can't let you off that easy! I'm going to make your life a living hell!" I wanted to die, but they wouldn't let me. I was in utter agony.

Just then, the hymn of God's words titled **"Seek to Love God No Matter How Great Your Suffering"** came to mind: **"During these last days you must bear testimony to God. No matter how great your suffering, you should walk until the very end, and even at your last breath, still you must be faithful to God and at the mercy of God; only this is truly loving God, and only this is the strong and resounding testimony"** (The

Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. Only by Experiencing Painful Trials Can You Know the Loveliness of God). I understood God's intention. God wanted me to live to testify for Him. Wanting to die after suffering just a little was not the behavior of someone who loves God. This was the behavior of a cowardly, useless person. I had to keep on living! If they really did strip off all my clothing and put me on display, this was evidence of their persecution of Christians. After thinking of this, I didn't want to die anymore. Then, an officer surnamed Xie gave me a lustful stare and said, "You're pretty easy on the eyes. Just 20 years old huh? You don't have a boyfriend yet? I'd like to see if you're still a virgin." As he spoke, he drew near me and pressed himself up against me, touching my face and chin. I was frightened and pushed him away. He staggered backward and clipped himself on the side of the table, and then got angry and rushed over to me, pinning my hands to the wall. He kissed me all over my face and neck. I was so upset that I screamed out. A few of the officers looking on roared with laughter. To protect myself from being violated, I kicked at him and didn't let him come near. Another officer used his camera to start taking pictures of me. He said, "How dare you hit an officer!" He made me absolutely enraged. They were all ganging up on me, but they tried to accuse me of hitting them? Weren't they inverting the truth? But I also thought, "If I fight back and they take a picture, they can post the picture online and use it to discredit and frame the church. Won't this humiliate God?" I didn't want them to have anything on

the church, so I had to choke back my tears and silently endure their teasing. In the end, they didn't get the picture they wanted and so they left.

Officer Xie had another male officer cuff me and pin my arms on the wall. He stepped on my feet, unzipped my down coat, and started touching me all over my back and waist. My hands and feet were all pinned down, so I had no way of fighting back. I was so upset that I began sobbing. Only when Officer Xie's girlfriend came in at that time did he finally let up. A little while later, Officer Xie came back in and pounced on me like he was possessed. There was no one else in the room at the time. He pinned my legs together tightly and wrapped his arms around me, touching me all over. He even took off my pants. I was terribly afraid and held my waistband tightly. He savagely slapped me across the face and I cried out. He put his hand over my mouth and nose. I couldn't breathe, and the more I struggled the weaker I became. This was exactly how I'd seen rapists treat their victims on TV. I was incredibly frightened and felt hopeless. Angry and exasperated, Officer Xie yelled, "Scream! Scream as loud as you can! Let's see if your God comes to rescue you!" His shamelessness and evil made me so angry. I hurriedly prayed to God, "Dear God, I don't want to be trampled on by Satan. Please rescue me, please rescue me!" Just as I was making my urgent plea to God, Officer Xie released his grip on my nose and mouth and I took in a deep breath. I immediately let out a scream and several officers in the adjacent room heard and came over. Only then did he let me go. I collapsed on the floor, thinking back on what had just happened. If it hadn't been for God's protection, I would have been raped. I thanked God in my heart.

That day at noon, seven or eight officers came in. When I didn't cooperate with them, the station chief came over to me and twisted my ear while pinching the back of my neck. It hurt badly and I ducked down. He

laughed at me, saying, “Tucking your head in like a turtle huh?” The others also joined in making fun of me. They surrounded me and started pushing me around like a ball. Two of the officers even seized the chance to pinch my chest and waist. They were such a bunch of savages! I gritted my teeth with anger and wanted to fight back! If I hadn’t gone through all this myself, I never would have believed that these were the “people’s police” that our textbooks and television shows claimed “served the people” and “fought for justice.” I couldn’t take it any longer and I yelled at them, saying, “Would real men bully a little girl?” They quit as soon as I said that. A little while later, a police officer held a gun to my temple and threatened me saying, “I could shoot you right now! When we catch you believers, we can kill you with no consequences. We can shoot you right away. Once you’re dead, we’ll just take you out and bury you! If you have any last words, say them now!” As he spoke, he loaded the gun with a bullet. When I saw he wasn’t kidding around, I got so scared that my legs turned to jelly. I thought to myself, “Is my life really ending at such a young age? I’ve been so lucky to encounter God, who has come to save mankind, but now I’m going to die before witnessing the spectacle of the kingdom gospel’s spreading throughout the universe and achieving a change in my corrupt disposition? That’s hard to take.” Just then, I thought of how the Lord Jesus said: **“Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear Him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell”** (Matthew 10:28). The great red dragon can only ravage and torture my flesh, but it can’t destroy my soul. It is just a paper tiger. On the surface it looks intimidating, but no matter how frenzied it becomes, it is always in God’s hands. It wouldn’t dare do anything to me without God’s permission. I thought of how Peter had been crucified upside down for God in his pursuit of loving Him. When he was crucified, he prayed to God saying: **“O**

God! Your time has now arrived; the time You prepared for me has arrived. I must be crucified for You, I must bear this testimony to You, and I hope that my love can satisfy Your requirements, and that it can become purer. Today, to be able to die for You, and be nailed to the cross for You, is comforting and reassuring to me, for nothing is more gratifying to me than to be able to be crucified for You and satisfy Your wishes, and to be able to give myself to You, to offer up my life to You”

(The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. The Experiences of Peter: His Knowledge of Chastisement and Judgment). Peter’s prayer was very illuminating for me. I felt much closer to God and no longer feared death. I thought of how God had been protecting me ever since I was arrested and how when Satan was tempting me, it was God’s words that guided me to see through its plot. When I was weak, He gave me faith and strength, and when I was in danger, God protected me so that I wouldn’t be trampled by Satan. Peter could submit to God and was crucified upside down for Him. I did not have Peter’s stature, but I was willing to take him as a model. It would be my honor to die for God today. I was deeply moved by God’s love and I silently prayed to God saying, “Oh God, I owe You so much. In my life, I’ve never earnestly pursued the truth or sought to love You. If I ever have a next life, I will still believe in You, follow You and repay Your love!” Some of the officers saw I was crying and, thinking I was scared, said, “This is your last chance. If you have any parting words, speak now!” I said, “Everyone eventually dies. I am dying because I’m being persecuted for righteousness’ sake, so I have no regrets.” After I said that, I closed my eyes and waited for the gun to fire. The officer got so angry that his hand started shaking and he said, “Your wish is my command!” He told me to turn my head to the side, then aimed the gun at my temple and fired a few shots, but somehow I didn’t die. Then I realized he had taken out the bullet. Another officer

slammed his hands on the table and said, “Do you think you’re a hero or something? No matter what we do to you, nothing seems to work!” They prodded my temple and smacked me over the head with the gun, saying, “Go ahead and cry! Why aren’t you crying?” I thought of a hymn that says: **“Though our heads may roll and our blood may spill, the backbones of God’s people cannot be bent.”** Before, when faced with their torture and threats, I just cried and cried to try to gain their sympathy. I had no faith in God at all. I was groveling before Satan and lacked resolve. I couldn’t humiliate God anymore with my spinelessness. So I dried my tears, clenched my fists, and resolved to fight it out with Satan until the bloody end! I sang the hymn **“I Wish to See the Day of God’s Glory”** in my head: **“With God’s exhortations in my heart, I will never bend the knee to Satan. Though our heads may roll and our blood may spill, the backbones of God’s people cannot be bent. I will bear resounding testimony for God, and humiliate devils and Satan. Pain and hardships are predestined by God, and I will be loyal and submit to Him unto death. Never again will I cause God to weep or worry. I will offer up my love and loyalty to God and complete my mission to glorify Him”** (Follow the Lamb and Sing New Songs).

Some of the officers saw me clenching my fists tightly and seethed with anger, saying, “She’s more stubborn than a mule!” Seeing the police frustrated and out of options, I knew that this horde of demons and Satans was humiliated and defeated. I truly understood what God meant when He said: **“When people are ready to sacrifice their lives, everything becomes trifling, and no one can get the better of them. What could be more important than life? Thus, Satan becomes incapable of doing any more in people, there is nothing it can do with man”** (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. Interpretations of the Mysteries of “God’s Words to the Entire

Universe,” Chapter 36). Man’s Achilles’ heel is his fear of death. Satan the devil knew about my Achilles’ heel and used it to threaten me and stop me from believing in and following God. But God’s wisdom is exercised based on Satan’s plots. When I gave my life over to God, Satan became powerless, it failed and was humiliated.

At noon, some of the officers went to eat while three remained to monitor me. One officer came over to me and, affecting a plastic smile, asked me, “Why don’t you cry?” I said, “I don’t have anything to cry about.” He said, “If you don’t cry, we’ll give you something to cry about!” As he spoke, he picked up a black bottle. He pried open my eyes and sprayed the chemical into my mouth and eyes, while another officer pinned me by my arms and head. Immediately my eyes began to burn and water and I couldn’t keep them open. The chemical stung painfully on my cheeks and my throat also stung from the chemical I’d swallowed. It hurt so much that I couldn’t even speak and I kept having to spit. He also threatened me saying that this was a kind of poison and it would kill me in half an hour. The third officer grabbed me by the handcuffs and took me to a different room. By then I was able to open my eyes a little and so they sprayed me with more of the chemical. Then they handcuffed me to the other brothers and sisters I’d been arrested with, turned a fan to its highest setting and opened all the windows and the door. He was wearing a big parka and a heater warmed his feet. He laughed heartily and said, “Nice and toasty right?” It was the dead of winter and my hands and feet quickly went ice-cold. Just then, I heard one of the sisters begin tapping her feet and quietly singing a song. I listened closely and realized that she was singing a hymn in praise of God. I also started tapping my foot to the beat. As I sang, I felt my strength restoring, and I thought, “No matter how these devils torture me, I’ll keep going regardless. Even if it means my death, I will stand firm

in my witness to satisfy God!” To my surprise, they let us go at around three in the afternoon. It turned out that during that time they had arrested so many brothers and sisters there was no room left in the detention center or the jail. When they found that they weren’t getting any valuable information from us, they just let us go. I knew, though, that this was God’s mercy. He had given us a way out. I thanked God in my heart.

During my arrest and persecution by the CCP, my flesh suffered a little and I was humiliated, but I gained a real discernment of the evil essence of the CCP. I clearly saw that the CCP is just a God-hating and God-resisting demon. As long as the great red dragon is in power, Satan is in power, brutalizing and corrupting all people. I renounced and rebelled against the great red dragon in my heart and looked forward to the day that Christ and justice would come to power. I hoped that Christ’s kingdom would be realized soon, and had even more faith to follow God until the very end!

15. Affections Must Be Principled

By Natasha, USA

As a child, my parents and teachers taught me to be a good person, and to practice gratitude, just like the saying “The kindness of a drop of water should be repaid with a gushing spring.” So since childhood, this was the principle by which I comported myself and treated others in society. Especially when others were kind to me, I did my best to repay their kindness twofold. As time went on, I received approval and praise from most of the people around me, and my relatives and friends thought I was kind and loyal, so they were willing to interact and get along with me. After believing in God, I got along with my brothers and sisters in the same way. I thought conducting myself in this way made me a good person with a conscience. However, through the exposure of God’s words, I realized that the ideas of traditional culture are not the truth, and are not the criteria for how we should act and conduct ourselves.

In September 2018, I was dismissed as a leader for my inability to do real work. At the time, I was very negative and weak, but Sister Leslie, who was responsible for general affairs, sent me many passages of God’s word to support and help me, which made me really touched. I felt Leslie not only didn’t look down on me, but she also encouraged and helped me. After that, Leslie arranged for me to handle general affairs. She took very good care of me, and usually took the initiative to ask my thoughts and opinions on matters regarding our duty. Seeing that Leslie valued me so much, I felt even more grateful to her. Later, when a church leader investigated evaluations of me, some brothers and sisters said things which were misunderstandings, but Leslie was familiar with the context of the incident and clarified these facts about me on the spot. For this, I was even more

grateful to her, because I felt she spoke up for me at a critical moment and saved my image. Although I didn't express my thanks to her in words, I always wanted to find a chance to thank her.

Not long after, Leslie was dismissed for not doing real work, and I was selected as team leader. While checking up on her work, I found she was often absent-minded and forgetful. I asked her in a gentle tone, "Leslie, why are you so careless in your duty?" When she heard this, rather than reflect on herself, she said, "I'm old and have a bad memory." Afterward, the sister who worked as my partner saw that Leslie was still forgetful in her duty and pointed it out to her several times, but she still didn't change. I wanted to find a good time to talk to her about it, but then I remembered that when I was first dismissed, I was in a bad state, and she had helped and supported me so gently. Now, she had just been dismissed, so if I exposed her problems now, wouldn't she think I was being too cruel? Besides, she had just been dismissed and was in a bad state, so her absent-mindedness was excusable. I should lovingly help her more and give her time to change. After that, when Leslie didn't do something properly in her duty, my partner and I just did it for her. I feared she would forget something, so I reminded her often, and frequently fellowshiped with her and asked about her state. But her state didn't improve. In several discussions about work, her suggestions weren't in line with the principles, and most of the brothers and sisters didn't approve, but she still insisted her point of view was right and forced others to accept it, which made the discussions nearly impossible to continue. I wanted very much to remind her, but then thought how she had been recently dismissed, and how miserable she must be. If I exposed her problems now, wouldn't it be rubbing salt in her wound? So I let it go, hoping she would realize it on her own in time. I didn't give her any reminders, and just tried to make sure she was less involved in work

discussions. But rather than reflecting on herself, she indirectly blamed me by saying I wasn't listening to her opinions. Seeing she had no knowledge of herself, I bit the bullet and leveled with her, saying, "Leslie, you are too arrogant and self-righteous. You really should reflect on yourself." At that time, I saw her face harden a bit, and her voice dropped. I felt bad all of a sudden. Was it a bit too much for me to treat her like this? After all the help she gave me before, was I being insensitive? I started to blame myself.

A few days later, the supervisor saw that my partner and I often did Leslie's work, so she asked us how Leslie was doing in her duty. The question made me anxious. If I answered honestly about Leslie's situation, she might be dismissed. I was only able to handle general affairs because she arranged it. She usually treated me well, and she helped me at critical moments. If she was dismissed when I was the team leader, would she resent me and say I was unconscionable and ruthless? To keep her work, I gave an objective account of her behaviors, and even went out of my way to add, "These behaviors are due to her bad state after recently being dismissed. She is consciously trying to change." Later, to keep her from being dismissed, at several gatherings, I deliberately fellowshipped on her state to help her, but she continued to muddle through as she always had, and there were constant problems in her duty. There was even one time when she purchased unnecessary items without consulting anyone, and the price was much higher than usual. At the time, I was very angry and wanted to prune her, but to preserve our relationship I held my temper. I simply persuaded her not to do it again, and to be more careful in her duty. She agreed in earnest, so I didn't say any more about it. During that time, brothers and sisters were constantly telling me about problems with Leslie's work. I really wanted to rebuke and prune her, but when I faced her, the words wouldn't come out. They were at the tip of my tongue a few times,

but I swallowed them. Later, the supervisor came to find out how Leslie was doing in her duty. She and the other brothers and sisters in our group evaluated Leslie together based on the principles, and determined that Leslie was unfit to continue handling general affairs, and urged me to dismiss her soon. But thinking that Leslie had just been dismissed as team leader, and now her duty was to be reassigned again—it would be such a blow! Could she take it? At that moment, memories of all the times she helped me flashed through my mind. For several days, whenever I thought of dismissing her, I felt repressed and miserable. For several nights, I tossed and turned, unable to sleep. It felt as bad as if I was dismissed. I couldn't stop thinking, "She helped me before, but now I have to personally dismiss her and expose her behavior. Will she think I'm an ungrateful person and resent me for it?" To avoid feeling guilty, I wanted to let the supervisor fellowship with Leslie, while I stood in the background not saying much, or even make an excuse to not go at all. But I knew this sort of intent was very despicable and shameful, so I felt trapped by the dilemma. In misery, I prayed to God, "God, I know it is right to dismiss Leslie, but why is it so difficult for me? God, where is my problem? Please guide me in knowing myself."

After I prayed, I pondered why I didn't find it hard to dismiss other people, but was so indecisive about dismissing Leslie. As I sought, I read these words of God: **"Some people are extremely sentimental. Every day, in all that they say, and in all of the ways they behave toward others, they live by their feelings. They feel affection for this person and that person, and they spend their days engaged in the niceties of affection. In everything they encounter, they live in the realm of feelings. ... You could say that feelings are this person's fatal flaw. They are constrained by their feelings in all matters, they are incapable of practicing the**

truth or acting according to principle, and they are often prone to rebel against God. Feelings are their greatest weakness, their fatal flaw, and their feelings are entirely able to bring them to ruin and destroy them. People who are overly sentimental are incapable of putting the truth into practice or submitting to God. They are preoccupied with the flesh and they are foolish and muddleheaded. It is that sort of person's nature to be very sentimental, and they live by their feelings" (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. How to Know Man's Nature). **"What characterizes feelings? Certainly not anything positive. It is a focus on physical relationships and satisfying the predilections of the flesh. Favoritism, defending other people's shortcomings, doting, pampering, and indulging all fall under feelings. Some people place great stock in feelings, they react to whatever happens to them based on their feelings; in their hearts, they know full well this is wrong, and yet are still incapable of being objective, much less of acting according to principle. When people are always constrained by feelings, are they capable of practicing the truth? This is extremely difficult! Many people's inability to practice the truth comes down to feelings; they regard feelings as especially important, they put them in the first place. Are they people who love the truth? Certainly not. What are feelings, in essence? They are a kind of corrupt disposition. The manifestations of feelings can be described using several words: favoritism, unprincipled protection of others, maintenance of physical relationships, and partiality; these are what feelings are"** (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. What Is the Truth Reality?). Only after reading God's words did I realize that dismissing Leslie caused me so much pain and discomfort because my feelings for her were too strong and I always felt constrained by them. I thought because Leslie helped me and was kind to me before, I had

to be grateful to her. When I saw she muddled through her duty, delayed work, and refused to change even after being fellowshipped with multiple times, I clearly knew I should have pruned her, but I feared it would hurt her pride and make her resent me, so I only talked to her about it gently and left it at that. She held incorrect views, but insisted that people listen to her and obey, which made work discussions grind to a halt several times, and caused a disturbance. All the while, I couldn't bring myself to expose or prune her. When the supervisor came to ask how Leslie was doing her duty, I worried she would be dismissed, so I lied and said she was trying to change, hoping to confuse the supervisor and make it impossible for her to judge correctly. When I saw that Leslie was unprincipled in her duty and wasted the church's money, I didn't rebuke her, and instead blindly shielded and accommodated her. Now, I had to dismiss her and expose her behavior, but I wanted to pass it off to the supervisor. My feelings were too strong, and I lacked all testimony of practicing the truth. To protect Leslie, and keep her from resenting me and calling me an ingrate, I continued to protect and indulge her, with no regard for the church's work. I lived in my feelings, cared for her flesh, and protected my personal relationship with her. I even thought this was lovingly helping her, acting out of affection and loyalty, but actually I was just engaging in the philosophy for worldly dealings. I wanted her to view me positively even if it harmed the church's interests. Everything I did was for myself. I was so evil and despicable! I felt deep remorse. I was acting from feelings, which harmed the church's work and made God loathe me. If I continued to act from feelings and not practice the truth, one day I would be eliminated.

After that, I wondered, "Why did I do so many things from feelings that go against the truth principles?" In my seeking, I read a passage of God's words: **"Intentions are a clear part of people's state, and one of**

the most common; in most matters, people have their own thoughts and intentions. When such thoughts and intentions occur, people think them legitimate, but most of the time they are for their own sake, for their own pride and interests, or else to cover something up, or to satisfy themselves in some way. At such times, you must examine how your intention came about, why it was produced. For example, God's house asks you to do the work of cleansing the church, and there is one individual who has always been perfunctory in their duty, always looking for ways to slack off. According to principle, this person should be cleansed away, but you have a good relationship with them. So what kinds of thoughts and intentions will arise in you? How will you practice? (Acting according to my own preferences.) And what produces these preferences? Because this person has been good to you or has done things for you, you have a good impression of them, and so at this time you want to protect them, and to defend them. Is this not the effect of feelings? You feel emotional toward them, and so take the approach of 'While the higher authorities have policies, the localities have their counter-measures.' You're double-dealing. On the one hand, you say to them, 'You must try a little harder when you do things. Stop being perfunctory, you have to suffer a little hardship; this is our duty.' On the other, you reply to the Above and say, 'They have changed for the better, they are more effective now when they perform their duty.' But what you're actually thinking in your mind is, 'This is because I worked on them. If I hadn't, they'd still be like they were.' In your mind, you're always thinking, 'They have been nice to me, they can't be cleared out!' What state is it when such things are in your intention? This is harming the work of the church by protecting personal emotional relationships. Does acting in this way accord with the truth

principles? And is there submission to your doing this? (No.) There is no submission; there is resistance in your heart. In the things that happen to you and the work you are supposed to do, your own ideas contain subjective judgments, and here emotional factors are mixed in. You are doing things based on feelings, and yet still believe that you are acting impartially, that you are giving people the chance to repent, and that you are giving them loving assistance; thus you do as you wish, not as God says. Working in this way reduces the quality of the work, reduces effectiveness, and harms the church's work—which is all the outcome of acting according to feelings. If you do not examine yourself, will you be able to identify the problem here? You never will. You might know that it is wrong to act in this way, that this is a lack of submission, but you think it over and say to yourself, 'I must help them with love, and after they have been helped and they get better, there will be no need to clear them out. Does God not give people the chance to repent? God loves people, so I must help them with love, and I must do as God asks.' After thinking these things, you do things your own way. Afterward, your heart feels at ease; you feel that you are practicing the truth. During this process, did you practice according to the truth, or did you act according to your own preferences and intentions? Your actions were wholly according to your own preferences and intentions. Throughout the whole process, you used your so-called kindness and love, feelings, and philosophies for worldly dealings to smooth things over, and you tried to walk the fence. It seemed like you were helping this person with love, but in your heart you were actually constrained by feelings—and, fearing the Above would find out, you tried to win them over with compromise, so that no one was offended and the work got done—which is the same way that

the nonbelievers try to walk the fence” (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. The Attitude Man Should Have Toward God). It was only after reading God’s words that I realized why I knew Leslie had problems, yet I didn’t expose her, and still protected her. It was because I wanted her to view me positively. Actually, I was controlled by the idea that “The kindness of a drop of water should be repaid with a gushing spring.” I used this idea as my principle for conducting myself and treating others in society. I believed people should be kind and loyal to others, so if they were kind to me, I had to repay that kindness twofold. Otherwise, I would be ungrateful, and would be condemned and spurned by others. So, when I saw Leslie helping me and taking care of me, as well as speaking up for me, I felt I had to repay her. When I saw that Leslie consistently muddled through her duty, I would rather violate the principles and harm the church’s interests than expose and prune her. More seriously, I kept blindly offering love and fellowship to help her, and I lied and deceived the supervisor to cover up the fact that she was muddling through her duty and disturbing church work. I did this purely to make people think I was a good person who was grateful and kind to others. Through what God’s words exposed, I finally saw that these ideas and viewpoints are all to mislead and corrupt people. I lived by these things without knowing right from wrong, and I acted and conducted myself without principles. Outwardly, I was doing my duty, but actually, I did things by my own will, without any submission to God. I even obstructed church work and resisted God without realizing it. If we believe in God, yet do not practice the truth and still live by these things, no matter how good our outward behavior is and how well we get along with people, in God’s eyes, we are still someone who resists God. Only then did I gain some discernment of these absurd and despicable satanic viewpoints. I saw that these things are all from Satan and run contrary to the truth; they

are all contaminated with human interests and desires, and they are evil and ugly. They shouldn't be the criteria by which I act and conduct myself.

A few days later, I saw another passage of God's word and gained some understanding of the nature of this matter. God's words say: **"This is not merely a failure to keep to God's word and your duties, this is taking Satan's schemes and philosophy for worldly dealings as if they were the truth, and following and practicing them. You are obeying Satan and living by a satanic philosophy, aren't you? You are not a person who submits to God, much less a person who abides by God's words. You are a complete scoundrel. Putting God's words aside, and instead taking a satanic phrase and practicing it as the truth, is betraying the truth and God! You work in God's house, yet the principles for your actions are satanic logic and philosophy for worldly dealings, what kind of person are you? This is someone who betrays God and someone who gravely shames God. What is the essence of this act? Openly condemning God and openly denying the truth. Isn't that the essence of it? (It is.) In addition to not following God's will, you are allowing one of Satan's devilish sayings and satanic philosophies for worldly dealings to run rampant in the church. In doing this, you become Satan's accomplice, assist Satan in carrying out its activities within the church, and disturb and disrupt church work. The essence of this problem is very serious, isn't it?"** (The Word, Vol. 4. Exposing Antichrists.

Excursus One: What the Truth Is). God's words felt like they were piercing my heart. Words like **"a complete scoundrel," "betraying the truth," "someone who gravely shames God,"** and **"Satan's accomplice"** sank into my heart like sharp swords. I lived by these ideas of traditional culture. In God's eyes, this was not just a momentary instance of acting on feelings instead of practicing the truth and safeguarding the church's interests, it was

being disloyal to God and my duty and was denying the truth, shaming and betraying God. The nature of this was very serious! Realizing this, I felt especially distressed and afraid. I didn't know that relying on satanic thoughts when believing in God and doing my duty was such a serious problem. It took a long time to calm myself down.

Later, I read two more passages of God's words. Almighty God says: **“Throughout all of humankind, there is not a single race in which the truth holds power. No matter how high, ancient, or mysterious the ideas or traditional culture a race has produced, or the education that has been received, or the knowledge it possesses, one thing is for sure: None of these things are the truth, or bear any relation to the truth. Some people say, ‘Some of the morals, or the notions for measuring right and wrong, correct and incorrect, black and white, contained within traditional culture seem pretty close to the truth.’ The fact that they sound close to the truth does not signify that they are close to it in meaning. Corrupt mankind's sayings derive from Satan, they are never the truth, whereas only God's words are the truth. Thus, no matter how close some of mankind's words may seem to God's words, they are not the truth and cannot become the truth; this is beyond doubt. They are close in wording and expression only, but in fact, these traditional notions are incompatible with the truths of God's words. Although there may be some closeness in the literal sense of these words, they do not share the same source. The words of God come from the Creator, whereas the words, ideas, and views of traditional culture come from Satan and the demons. Some people say, ‘The ideas, views, and famous sayings of traditional culture are universally acknowledged as positive; even if they are lies and fallacies, can they become the truth if people uphold them for several hundred—several thousand—years?’**

Absolutely not. Such a viewpoint is as ridiculous as saying apes evolved into men. Traditional culture will never become the truth. Culture is culture, and no matter how noble it is, it is still merely something relatively positive produced by corrupt mankind. But being positive is not equivalent to being the truth, being positive does not make it a criterion; it is merely relatively positive, and nothing more. So is it now clear to us whether, behind this ‘positivity,’ the impact of traditional culture on mankind is good or bad? Without a doubt, it has a bad and negative impact on mankind” (The Word, Vol. 4. Exposing Antichrists. Excursus One: What the Truth Is). “Humankind has been conditioned, numbed, and corrupted by these aspects of traditional culture. And what is the final result? That humankind is misled, restrained, and bound by traditional culture, and a kind of mentality and theory arises naturally, which humankind advocates and spreads, transmits widely and makes people accept. Ultimately, it captures everyone’s heart, makes everyone endorse this kind of mentality and idea, and everyone is corrupted by this idea. When they have been corrupted to a certain degree, people no longer have any notions about right or wrong; they no longer want to discern what is justice and what is wickedness, nor are they willing to discern what are positive things and what are negative things anymore. There even comes a day when they are unclear whether they are actually human, and there are many sick people who don’t know whether they are a man or a woman. How far away from destruction is a human race such as this? ... That Satan’s philosophies, laws, ideas, and so-called mentalities have misled and corrupted the entire human race. To what extent have they been misled and corrupted? People have all accepted the fallacies and devilish sayings of Satan as the truth; they all worship Satan and follow Satan. They do not understand the words

of God, the Creator. No matter what the Creator says, how much He says, and how clear and practical His words are, no one understands; no one comprehends. They are all numb and dull-witted, and their thinking and minds are mixed up. How were they mixed up? It is Satan who mixed them up. Satan thoroughly corrupted people” (The Word, Vol. 4.

Exposing Antichrists. Excursus One: What the Truth Is). In the past, I only knew that satanic philosophies for worldly dealings like “Every man for himself and the devil take the hindmost,” and “In all the universe, only I reign supreme,” were contrary to the truth, and not things those with normal humanity should possess. But for sayings from traditional culture that seemed to be in line with conscience and morality, like “A kindness received should be gratefully repaid,” “The kindness of a drop of water should be repaid with a gushing spring,” “Man is not inanimate; how can he be free from emotions?” and other seemingly civilized and noble-sounding traditional morals, I couldn’t discern them. I thought these things were passed down from generation to generation, and good people should follow these concepts. I didn’t exercise discernment for these traditional thoughts, and regarded them all as positive things to pursue and practice. If I went against these things I felt guilty, and I feared people would condemn and spurn me. Now, through what God’s words exposed, I finally saw that under the control of these ideas and views, people only think about feelings when they interact with each other, not principles, and can’t discern between good and evil, or between right and wrong. As long as others were kind to me, even if they were bad or evil people, and even if helping them was helping do evil, I had to repay their kindness and help them. Outwardly, I seemed conscionable, but I was actually confused and stupid, and I had my own motives and intents. I did it to protect my own good image and reputation; it was entirely for my own interests. I was very selfish, despicable, and

hypocritical. I wasn't a truly good person at all. If I clung to these satanic philosophies and doctrines, it would only make me more and more cunning, deceitful, selfish, and evil. I saw that these seemingly noble and legitimate traditional ideas and sayings are simply sugar-coated lies. They sound lofty and in line with human morality and ethics, but they are actually hostile to the truth, and are one of Satan's ways of corrupting people. I realized I had believed in God for many years, but because I didn't practice the truth, and lived by these traditional ideas, I put my conscience at the heart of all my interactions, always wanted to repay people's kindness, but couldn't discern between good and evil. I was such a confused idiot that couldn't tell right from wrong! God has expressed so much truth in the last days and revealed in concrete detail all aspects of the truth that we should practice, in the hope that we conduct ourselves and act according to the truth and God's word, and so that we can testify unto God and glorify Him. But I did my duty purely to maintain my fleshly relationships, and didn't seek the truth or protect the church's interests. Once I had recognized this, I felt guilt and remorse for all I had done. I came before God and prayed, "God, I live by satanic poisons. I have done too many things that go against the truth and resist You. God, I want to repent and act according to the truth principles."

After that, I wondered, "If living by these traditional views and ideas doesn't mean I have good humanity, what does it mean to have good humanity?" Later, I saw a passage of God's words that gave me an accurate standard by which to evaluate things. God's words say: **"There must be a standard for having good humanity. It does not involve taking the path of moderation, not sticking to principles, endeavoring not to offend anyone, currying favor everywhere you go, being smooth and slick with everyone you meet, and making everyone speak well of you. This is not the standard. So, what is the standard? It is being able to submit to**

God and the truth. It is approaching one's duty and all manner of people, events, and things with principles and a sense of responsibility. This is plain for all to see; everyone is clear about this in their heart. Moreover, God scrutinizes people's hearts and knows their situation, each and every one; no matter who they are, no one can fool God. Some people always boast that they possess good humanity, that they never speak ill of others, never harm anyone else's interests, and they claim never to have coveted other people's property. When there is a dispute over interests, they even prefer to suffer loss than take advantage of others, and everyone else thinks they are good people. However, when performing their duties in God's house, they are wily and slippery, always scheming for themselves. Never do they think of the interests of God's house, never do they treat as urgent the things God treats as urgent or think as God thinks, and never can they set aside their own interests so as to perform their duties. They never forsake their own interests. Even when they see evil people committing evil, they do not expose them; they have no principles whatsoever. What kind of humanity is this? It is not good humanity. Pay no attention to what such people say; you must see what they live out, what they reveal, and what their attitude is when they perform their duties, as well as what their internal state is and what they love. If their love of their own fame and gain exceeds their loyalty to God, if their love of their own fame and gain exceeds the interests of God's house, or if their love of their own fame and gain exceeds the consideration they show for God, then are such people possessed of humanity? They are not people with **humanity**" (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. In Giving One's Heart to God, One Can Obtain the Truth). After reading God's words, I understood that a person of good humanity doesn't compromise just so that no one is

offended and everyone supports and approves of them. Instead, they can love the truth, love positive things, are responsible in their duties, can uphold the truth principles, and protect the church's work. Only people like this are genuinely good people. If we protect our relationships with people, our own fame and status, and get along well with others, but are not loyal to God in our duty, and maintain relationships with people at the cost of harming the church's work, then we are extremely selfish and despicable. No matter how morally acceptable our outward behavior is, it misleads people and is hostile to the truth. I thought about how I lived by these traditional ideas and viewpoints, and disguised myself as a good person. Actually, I only became more and more selfish, deceitful, and evil inside. Everything I did was to protect my reputation and status, and to satisfy my personal ambitions and desires. I had no human likeness at all; everything I lived out was demonic. In the past, when I judged whether someone had humanity, it was based on my own notions and imaginings. It didn't accord with the truth at all, and wasn't in line with God's standards for evaluating people.

Over the next few days, I contemplated how to practice in accordance with the truth principles and God's intentions. In God's word, I read: **"These relationships will then not be built upon the flesh, but upon the foundation of God's love. You will have almost no fleshly interactions with other people, but on a spiritual level, there will be fellowship and mutual love, comfort, and provision between you. All of this is done upon the foundation of a desire to satisfy God—these relationships are not maintained through human philosophies for worldly dealings, they are formed naturally when one carries a burden for God. They do not require any artificial, human effort from you, you need only to practice according to the principles of God's words. ... Normal interpersonal**

relationships are established upon the foundation of turning one's heart toward God, not through human effort. If God is absent from a person's heart, then their relationships with other people are merely relationships of the flesh. They are not normal, they are lustful indulgences, and they are hated and loathed by God" (The Word, Vol. 1. The

Appearance and Work of God. It Is Very Important to Establish a Normal Relationship With God).

God requires that we treat people according to the truth principles, use God's love as a foundation to interact with our brothers and sisters, support and help each other in the truth and life, and not engage in fleshly philosophies for worldly dealings. Leslie helped me in the past, and this was God's sovereignty and arrangement; I should have recognized that and accepted it from God. But instead, I attributed all of it to Leslie herself, and showed my gratitude to her in everything. I saw that my relationship with Leslie was based on the flesh, that what I did and how I conducted myself was not in line with God's intentions at all, and that I had no principles. Actually, when brothers and sisters encounter failures or setbacks and become negative and weak, fellowshiping on God's words to help and support them is in line with the truth principles, and something we should do. But those who consistently muddle through their duties and are irresponsible, and who even disrupt and disturb the work of the church should be restricted, exposed, pruned, or dismissed. They should never be sheltered or protected out of feelings. Even when we are affectionate, we must act according to principle. Leslie was still irresponsible and negligent in her duties after she was dismissed, and she had no real understanding of her own problems. If I used God's words to fellowship on and dissect her behavior and the nature of her problems, so she could reflect on herself, repent, and change, this would actually be love for her. It would also benefit

the church's work. Once I realized this, I suddenly felt a sense of release, and I no longer wanted to protect my fleshly relationships.

After that, I used God's words to expose Leslie's attitude toward her duty and her various behaviors, and reassigned her duty. After fellowshiping, I felt very at ease. Leslie didn't resent me, and she accepted it from God. She said that without being dismissed and exposed, she never would have realized that what she did caused such disruption and disturbance, and she had no complaints about how she was dealt with. When I heard her say that, I truly felt that by living according to God's words we can genuinely benefit and help people, and we also feel very relieved. I personally experienced that these seemingly civilized and noble things from traditional culture—no matter how many people tout and admire them—are not the truth. They are all distorted and evil, and can only harm others and ourselves. The truth is the only standard for our actions and conduct.

16. I No Longer Cower in Timidity

By Mu Yu, China

On September 2, 2022, I went to a leader's house for something, but no one was home. Sister Xiao Hong, who lived across from her, happened to see me. She called me over to her place and said nervously, "Something's happened! Zhou Ling was taken by the cops. It's been two days already and we haven't heard a thing. The leader went to let everyone know—she should be back soon." When I heard this news, I felt both nervous and afraid. Zhou Ling was a leader before, and I didn't know what sort of torture the police would use on her. Would she break under the torture and become a Judas? I'd just been at her house. If the police were doing a stakeout, they might have seen me. I moved here in the first place because I was on the run. The cops had been after me nonstop for years. If they got me, they'd definitely use even worse torture on me. I might be beaten to death. I was really afraid and wanted to get out of the area as soon as possible after getting things done. The leader got to Xiao Hong's house soon after, and then went back home after we finished our discussion. After just two or three minutes had passed, Xiao Hong ran back in a panic and said, "The leader was just leaving, and seven or eight cops took her and left. Zhou Ling was in their car, too. She must have told them where the leader lives. Whatever you do, don't go out." My heart leaped into my throat. Xiao Hong and the leader lived right across from each other. The police could be just a few steps away. If they got me, I was sure I wouldn't get away unscathed. I hid in the house and didn't dare look out the window, and I was calling on God nonstop in my heart, hoping the cops would leave soon. The police car drove off after about an hour and my heart finally calmed down. But Zhou Ling was at my house a couple days before—would she have sold

me out, too? My place wasn't safe anymore. Where should I go? I remembered I had a notebook at my house with brothers' and sisters' phone numbers written in it that I needed to remove as soon as possible. There were three other host homes close to mine. If they weren't notified right away, once the notebook was found by the cops, then more brothers and sisters would be implicated. But if I went back right then, I would be playing right into their hands. I'd been out of town doing my duty for years, and I was a major target for arrest by the police. I'd suffer even worse torture if I were arrested. I thought, "No way, I'd better go on the run and find a safe place right away!" But with these thoughts, I found no peace in my heart, so I called out to God nonstop. Then I thought of a passage of God's words: **"You should not be afraid of this and that; no matter how many difficulties and dangers you might face, you are capable of remaining steady before Me, unobstructed by any hindrance, so that My will may be carried out unimpeded. This is your duty; otherwise, I shall bring My wrath upon you, and with My hand I shall.... You will then endure endless mental suffering. You must endure all; for Me, you must be ready to relinquish everything you possess and do everything you can to follow Me, and be ready to expend your all. Now is the time that I shall test you: Will you offer your loyalty to Me? Can you loyally follow Me to the end of the road? Be not afraid; with My support, who could ever block this road? Remember this! Do not forget! All that occurs is by My goodwill, and everything is under My observation. Can you follow My word in all that you say and do? When the trials of fire come upon you, will you kneel down and call out? Or will you cower, incapable of moving forward?"** (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. Utterances of Christ in the Beginning, Chapter 10). Through God's words, I realized that my stature was very small and I lacked true faith. Seeing those around me

arrested one after another, I was afraid and wanted to find a safe place to hide. I was disregarding the church's interests to protect my own safety—how selfish I was! With the leader arrested, lots of brothers and sisters had to be notified, and lots of copies of God's words had to be moved. If that wasn't properly taken care of as soon as possible, it could lead to more brothers and sisters being arrested. As a church deacon, protecting brothers and sisters as well as the books of God's words was my duty and responsibility. If I chose to be a coward and drag out an ignoble existence because of being afraid and timid, that would be incredibly irresponsible. God was watching me at this critical time to see if I'd be considerate of His intention and protect the church's work. I should lean on God and take care of the aftermath work right away. As for whether I'd be arrested or not, that was decided by God's sovereignty and arrangements. I was ready to leave myself in God's hands. When I realized that, I wasn't as nervous and fearful anymore. As I approached my house, I saw a police car stopped at the entrance. My heart started pounding. I thought, "Apparently the Judas did sell me out. I don't know if the three host homes nearby have also been searched. I have to report the church's situation to upper leadership as soon as possible, so they can take precautions and make arrangements in time to prevent even greater losses to the church's work."

I knew that Sister Su Hua could contact the upper leadership, so I went to find her. Right after I got there, her nonbelieving husband said nervously, "Some police just came by. Su Hua is out, so they didn't get her. They just went to your place to make more arrests." I left in a hurry, not daring to hang around. On the way back, I was thinking about how evil the great red dragon is. It makes such incredible efforts just to arrest people who believe in God. Brothers and sisters were being arrested one after another, and I was in danger of arrest at any moment. If I couldn't take the torture and became

a Judas, wouldn't my path of faith be at an end? The more I thought about it, the more weak and afraid I became, and I felt like being a believer in China was too hard, too dangerous. So I called out to God in my heart over and over again, "God! What should I do?" Then I thought of this passage of God's words: **"Faith is like a single log bridge: Those who cling abjectly to life will have difficulty in crossing it, but those who are ready to sacrifice themselves can pass over, sure of foot and worry-free. If man harbors timid and fearful thoughts, it is because Satan has fooled them, afraid that we will cross the bridge of faith to enter into God. Satan is trying in every way possible to send us its thoughts. We should at every moment pray for God to illuminate and enlighten us, at every moment rely on God to purge Satan's poison from within us, practice within our spirit at every moment how to come close to God, and let God have dominion over our whole being"** (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. Utterances of Christ in the Beginning, Chapter 6). God's words gave me faith and strength. I realized I was living in timidity and fear, afraid of being arrested and beaten to death. I was falling for Satan's tricks. Satan was using my weakness to constrain me, to get me to lose faith in God so I wouldn't dare do my duty and thus slowly grow distant from God and betray Him. I had to see through Satan's tricks. The more I faced these kinds of situations, the more I should draw close to God, rely on Him, and live by His words. Even if I were arrested, I would submit and never complain. I would stand firm in my witness and satisfy God.

I couldn't get in contact with the upper leadership and decided to first take care of the aftermath work. The first thing I had to do was to think of a way to retrieve the notebook with phone numbers that I still left at home; otherwise, if the police found it, several brothers and sisters would all be arrested. But the police could be staking out my house—wouldn't I be

playing into their hands? Just as I was feeling conflicted, I remembered God's words: **"Each of you believes yourself to be so compatible with Me, but if that were the case, then to whom would such irrefutable evidence apply? You believe yourselves to possess the utmost sincerity and loyalty toward Me. You think that you are so kindhearted, so compassionate, and have devoted so much to Me. You think that you have done more than enough for Me. But have you ever held this up against your actions? ... You shut Me out for the sake of your children, or your husband, or your own self-preservation. Instead of caring about Me, you care about your family, your children, your status, your future, and your own gratification. When have you ever thought of Me as you spoke or acted? On frigid days, your thoughts turn to your children, your husband, your wife, or your parents. On blistering days, I hold no place in your thoughts, either. When you perform your duty, you are thinking of your own interests, of your own personal safety, of the members of your family. What have you ever done that was for Me? When have you ever thought of Me? When have you ever devoted yourself, at any cost, to Me and My work? Where is the evidence of your compatibility with Me? Where is the reality of your loyalty to Me? Where is the reality of your submission to Me? When have your intentions not been for the sake of gaining My blessings? You fool and deceive Me, you play with the truth, you conceal the existence of the truth, and betray the essence of the truth. What awaits you in the future by going against Me in this way?"** (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. You Should Seek the Way of Compatibility With Christ). Every question felt like an accusation from God in my heart. In the past, I felt that I could leave my family and job behind for my duty, so I was loyal to God. But when I actually faced the great red dragon's arrests, I saw how small my stature

was. Before, I was just shouting empty slogans and doctrines. A real crisis revealed my true stature. All I thought about was how to protect my own interests. I wasn't protecting the church's work at all. I wasn't someone who cared about God's intentions. People who truly consider God's intentions can give up everything to satisfy God, even their own life, when something involves the church's interests. I thought of how brothers and sisters risked their lives to deliver the books of God's words, and that so many of them were arrested by the great red dragon in the process of transporting the books. Some were even beaten to death. They set aside concern over their life and death just to fulfill their duty and satisfy God so that brothers and sisters could read God's words. But I didn't consider the church's interests at all. I just thought of my own safety when faced with danger, afraid of being arrested and tortured to death. Normally, I'd bend over backward for something that benefited me, but now I couldn't make the slightest sacrifice for the church's interests. Compared with those brothers and sisters, I was incredibly selfish. I had no consideration for God's intentions at all. Now that a church leader had been arrested, as a church worker hiding out instead of rising up to protect church work, I was safe but I lost my duty and testimony. Then what was the point of me living? Wasn't I just a walking corpse? At this thought, I prayed to God, "God, whether or not I'll be arrested today is entirely in Your hands. Please give me faith and wisdom so I can lean on You and fulfill my duty."

Around 2 a.m., I got to the house of a sister that lived nearby. I found out that the police had visited several other host homes close to mine. Some of the brothers and sisters ran away and escaped arrest. They told me that the cops were sure to come back, and told me to leave right away. I didn't dare hang around for long. I saw there was no one waiting at the entrance of the house, so I rushed back home and got the notebook with the phone

numbers. This made me breathe a sigh of relief. Then I went to Brother Yang Guang's place. As soon as he saw me, he said fearfully, "Yesterday I was arrested along with my wife. They let us go last night. Several other brothers and sisters that lived around here have been arrested, too." And so, I rushed out of there. I was thinking on the way back that the environment was getting worse, and arrests of brothers and sisters were happening all over the place. I'd been sold out by the Judas, too. The police were sure to have a description of me, and with so much surveillance around, I could be arrested at any moment. What if I couldn't withstand their torture? That was a terrifying thought for me. I thought I'd be a little safer if I went into hiding, but the aftermath work still wasn't done. If I went into hiding now, wouldn't that make me a deserter? I'd been a believer all these years and enjoyed so much watering from God's words. If I ran away at a critical time, not even fulfilling my duty or responsibilities, I would have no conscience or humanity whatsoever. Would I even count as a believer? I would be no different from Judas who betrayed God. At this thought, I quietly made up my mind that I would rather be arrested and die at the hands of the great red dragon than run away and drag out an ignoble existence. I had to stand firm in my witness, satisfy God, and do my utmost to fulfill my duty. I read this in God's words that evening: **"In My plan, Satan has, all along, been stalking behind each step and, as the foil of My wisdom, has always been trying to find ways and means to disrupt My original plan. Yet could I succumb to its deceitful schemes? All things in heaven and on earth act as My service objects; could the deceitful schemes of Satan be any different? This is precisely where My wisdom intersects; it is precisely that which is wondrous about My deeds, and it is the principle of operation for My entire management plan. During the era of the building of the kingdom, still I do not avoid**

the deceitful schemes of Satan, but continue to do the work I must. Among the universe and all things, I have chosen the deeds of Satan as My foil. Is this not a manifestation of My wisdom? Is this not precisely that which is wondrous about My work?" (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. God's Words to the Entire Universe, Chapter 8). I could see God's almightiness and wisdom in His words. The great red dragon is an enemy to God. It madly arrests and persecutes Christians and disturbs God's work, vainly hoping to destroy the work God does to save mankind. But the great red dragon's arrests and persecution allow us to develop discernment over its evil essence that harms man and is against God, then hate it from the heart and break ties with it. Its arrests and persecution also reveal true believers from false ones, and distinguish the sheep from the goats, and the wheat from the tares. In times of crisis, there are some who don't do their duty out of fear and timidity, or leave the faith, and some who betray God and become Judases when they're arrested and can't bear the torture. They are the ones revealed as tares, who will be blown away by the wind. Doesn't that show God's wisdom and righteousness? That reminded me of what the Lord Jesus said: **"For whoever will save his life shall lose it: and whoever will lose his life for My sake shall find it"** (Matthew 16:25). I thought of the saints through the ages who were martyred for spreading God's gospel. Some were crucified upside down; some were drawn and quartered. Although they died, their deaths had meaning. While those who betrayed God and became Judases appear to still be alive from the outside, their hearts are in agony. They are like living corpses, in unspeakable misery. After they die, their souls will still go down to hell and be punished. I didn't see this matter clearly and even wanted to shirk my duty and hide. If I caused losses to the church's work because of a dereliction of duty, that would be a transgression—an eternal stain. If I were able to sacrifice my

life and be loyal in my duty, even if I were arrested and beaten to death, I could bear testimony for God and shame Satan. My death would have value and meaning!

Then I read more of God's words: **"Regardless of how 'powerful' Satan is, regardless of how audacious and ambitious it is, regardless of how great is its ability to inflict damage, regardless of how wide-ranging are the techniques with which it corrupts and lures man, regardless of how clever are the tricks and schemes with which it intimidates man, regardless of how changeable is the form in which it exists, it has never been able to create a single living thing, has never been able to set down laws or rules for the existence of all things, and has never been able to rule and control any object, whether animate or inanimate. Within the cosmos and the firmament, there is not a single person or object that was born from it, or exists because of it; there is not a single person or object that is ruled by it, or controlled by it. On the contrary, it not only has to live under the dominion of God, but, moreover, must submit to all of God's orders and commands. Without God's permission, it is difficult for Satan to touch even a drop of water or grain of sand upon the land; without God's permission, Satan is not even free to move the ants about upon the land, let alone mankind, who was created by God. In the eyes of God, Satan is inferior to the lilies on the mountain, to the birds flying in the air, to the fish in the sea, and to the maggots on the earth. Its role among all things is to serve all things, to serve mankind, and to serve God's work and His plan of management. Regardless of how malicious its nature, and how evil its essence, the only thing it can do is to dutifully abide by its function: being of service to God, and providing a counterpoint to God. Such is the substance and position of Satan. Its essence is unconnected to life,**

unconnected to power, unconnected to authority; it is merely a plaything in God's hands, just a machine in service to God!" (The Word, Vol. 2. On Knowing God. God Himself, the Unique I). I could see God's power and authority through His words. Absolutely everything, whether it be alive or dead, is in God's hands. Satan renders service for God's work—it serves as a foil. No matter how scheming the great red dragon is, and regardless of how much it harnesses the forces of many people and things, without God's permission, it can't touch a hair on our heads. I thought of Job's experience: Satan attacked and hurt him, trying to get him to deny and reject God. God allowed Satan to treat Job badly, but didn't allow it to endanger Job's life, and Satan didn't dare go against God's command. When I was handling the aftermath work, I came out of one dangerous situation after another unscathed. That was entirely God's care and protection. All these experiences had showed me God's almightiness and sovereignty. If God didn't allow the great red dragon to get me, it couldn't. If He allowed my arrest, I wouldn't be able to escape it even if I wanted to. Understanding this gave me faith. I felt ready to put my life in God's hands and submit to His orchestrations and arrangements.

A few days later, a letter from the leaders came, saying that in the arrests the cops had conducted in our region, two homes used for safeguarding books had been raided. Just one home was left, and everything had to be moved right away. Since everyone who knew the safekeepers of the books had been arrested except for me, and I was relatively familiar with the area and the church members, they wanted me to help move the books. I knew very well that under the circumstances it was best for me to go, and it was a responsibility I couldn't shrug off. But the environment was so adverse now and the great red dragon was still pursuing people. If I went at a time like this, wouldn't I be putting myself in harm's way? I felt kind of

timid. But I thought of how the situation was in God's hands, and if God didn't allow it, the great red dragon couldn't do anything to me. So I decided to take the risk to go and move the books. I said a prayer, "Oh God! This duty has come to me, and I'm ready to fulfill my responsibility. No matter what happens next, I'm willing to submit to Your orchestrations and arrangements. Even if I'm arrested, even if I'm tortured, I'll never be a deserter again. I'll offer You my loyalty, and stand firm in my witness to shame Satan!" So I asked around, and found the home storing the books. The brother there said seven or eight officers had already come to his house and made an arrest. They arrested his wife without a word, and fined them 2,000 yuan, but they didn't find the books being kept there—they had to be moved as soon as possible. We rushed to get the books packed into the car. For the whole drive, my heart didn't dare stray from God for a moment. In the end we got the books to a safe place without a hitch. I thanked God over and over again!

Thinking back about this whole experience, I saw God's wisdom and almightiness, as well as how shallow my faith was. Without the great red dragon's arrests, I wouldn't see my own stature clearly, and I especially wouldn't acknowledge my selfishness, despicableness and fear of death, nor would I have any understanding of God's almightiness and sovereignty. I've also gotten to experience that God really is by our side, and as long as we lean on God, He will guide us and open up a path for us. This understanding is something I couldn't have gained in a peaceful environment.

17. Lessons Learned From Reporting a False Leader

By Zhou Xuan, China

In September of 2019, I began serving as a leader and was in charge of work at a few local churches with my partner Wang Ran. Because I was fairly new to the duty, I was still unfamiliar with certain aspects of the work and would often seek Wang Ran out for discussion. Later on, however, I discovered that Wang Ran failed to bear a burden in her duty. When I proposed going with her to one church to fellowship with two leaders there who were vying for fame and gain and failing to partner harmoniously, she didn't take the matter seriously and kept putting it off. As a result, because we were too slow to resolve the issue, the church's work was negatively influenced. What's more, she also dragged her feet when I wanted to discuss how we could help resolve some of the issues and difficulties our sisters and brothers were facing while spreading the gospel. Consequently, those issues did not get resolved in a timely manner and the gospel work was negatively affected. I noticed that Wang Ran didn't have a sense of responsibility in her duty and I considered pointing this out to her, but I was new to this leadership duty and still unfamiliar with certain aspects of the work, so I worried that if I offended her and our working relationship was affected, she wouldn't help me when I encountered problems in my duty. For this reason, I ended up not pointing out my observation to her. Not soon after that, I noticed that Wang Ran would often pass verdicts on people based on her arrogant disposition when adjusting personnel. She would say "This person won't do" and "That one is no good" and would come up with all kinds of excuses not to cultivate them. As a result, certain church projects proceeded slowly because of the failure to assign suitable people to

manage them. When our leader knew this, they asked us to find suitable candidates as soon as possible, but when Wang Ran saw the candidates I suggested, she immediately said they were no good. I thought to myself, “More brothers and sisters are needed to participate in the church’s work, but she not only has failed to cultivate people, she has even always obstructed cultivation. She is disrupting and disturbing the church’s work.” I wanted to discuss the gravity of this issue with her, but I was afraid if I spoke too frankly, she would hold it against me, so I just casually mentioned that, “We shouldn’t pass verdicts on people.” However, Wang Ran didn’t accept my suggestion. Another time, when I went to a church with her to host the election of a leader, a brother wasn’t clear about certain principles regarding the election and asked a few questions, but Wang Ran not only didn’t fellowship the truth and help him resolve the questions, she even resented what she saw as his troublesomeness and criticized him as such. This led to a very awkward atmosphere during the gathering and influenced the election. I saw that as a leader, Wang Ran didn’t treat the brothers and sisters with love, constrained them from her position of status and disturbed the election. I wanted to say something to her, but just as I was going to do so, I thought about how when I brought up her deficiencies with her before, she not only didn’t accept my opinion, she was even resistant and resentful. If she didn’t accept my suggestion again, I would be embarrassed in front of so many brothers and sisters. “Forget it,” I thought, “the fewer issues the better; I shouldn’t make trouble for myself.” A few days later, the gospel deacon mentioned to me that Wang Ran wasn’t resolving brothers and sisters’ real issues and difficulties during gatherings, their work performance was poor and when they sought her out for paths of solution, she just ignored them, didn’t take their requests seriously and even would get angry and lecture them. Despite pointing these issues out to her

on several occasions, she still wouldn't accept her suggestions and so the deacon proposed that we write a report together concerning Wang Ran's issues. I thought that everything the gospel deacon said was true and according to principle we should indeed report her, but then I thought, "If we write the report and our leader comes to investigate, will Wang Ran not admit wrongdoing and think that I had been swayed by a biased opinion and was trying to exclude her? If I strain our relationship, how will we do our duties together going forward? I'd better not say anything." Having made up my mind, I told the deacon that I'd wait until everything had been made clear through investigation before making a decision. After that, I began to notice that Wang Ran was having more and more issues. One time while looking through our account, I noticed that she wasn't using the church's money according to principle. She had bought things for the church without discussing with anyone and without considering if they were practical purchases. The things she bought ended up being inappropriate for the church's purposes and couldn't be used, meaning she had wasted the church's money. I felt quite guilty after seeing that situation unfold and thought to myself, "I have to protect the church's interests this time. I have to point out her issues and have a good, long discussion with her." But when I did end up pointing out her issues, she not only didn't accept my suggestions, she even tried to argue with me and defend herself. I wanted to expose the nature and consequences of her actions to her, but then I thought, "If I'm too harsh in my exposure, not only will she hold it against me, she'll give me attitude every day. That will make life much harder for me." So, I just tactfully reminded her that when faced with issues as a leader, we must seek more and have a God-fearing heart. After that, Wang Ran developed a bias toward me and would ignore me when discussing work and tell me to resolve it myself. I felt that she consistently failed to be responsible in her

duty, acted recklessly and arbitrarily, didn't accept pruning, and didn't accept the truth, and that she wasn't suited to continue in her duty. I wanted to write a letter to the leader concerning her situation, but I worried that if she were dismissed, she might think that I ratted her out behind her back and would hold that against me. Then it would be awkward for me if we ever saw each other later on. I mulled it over in my head for a while, but ultimately decided to abandon the idea of writing a letter to the leader. I felt incredibly guilty that despite understanding the truth, I was still unable to practice the truth due to being constrained by my corrupt disposition. For the next few days, I didn't feel like doing anything and kept hitting a wall in everything I did try to do, and I felt terribly dark inside. I prayed often, telling God about my situation and asking Him to guide me to understand myself.

One day during devotionals, I saw this passage of God's words: **"When you see a problem yet do nothing to stop it, do not fellowship about it, do not try to limit it, and moreover you do not report it to those above you, but play the part of people pleaser, is this a sign of disloyalty? Are people pleasers loyal to God? Not even a little. Such a person is not just disloyal to God—they are acting as Satan's accomplice, its attendant and follower. They are disloyal in their duty and responsibility, but to Satan, they are quite loyal. Herein lies the essence of the problem. As to professional inadequacy, it is possible to constantly learn and draw together your experiences while performing your duty. Such problems can be easily resolved. The most difficult thing to resolve is man's corrupt disposition. If you do not pursue the truth or resolve your corrupt disposition, but are always playing the people pleaser, and not pruning or helping those whom you have seen violate the principles, nor exposing or revealing them, but always**

shrinking back, not taking responsibility, then such performance of duty as yours will only compromise and delay the work of the church. Treating the performance of your duty as a trifle without taking an iota of responsibility doesn't just affect the work's effectiveness, but also leads to repeated delays in the church's work. When you perform your duty this way, are you not just being perfunctory and being deceptive toward God? Does it show any loyalty to God? If you are constantly being perfunctory while performing your duty, and are steadfastly unrepentant, then you will inevitably be eliminated" (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. The Proper Fulfillment of Duty Requires Harmonious Cooperation). God's words helped me to understand how people pleasers are afraid of offending others, fail to consider the interests of God's house due to always being concerned about maintaining their relationships and do not hesitate to sacrifice the interests of God's house in order to protect their own interests. In essence, they just act as Satan's lackeys in disrupting and disturbing the work of God's house. They don't have the slightest loyalty to their duty and are particularly selfish and despicable. Reflecting on my time in partnership with Wang Ran, I had clearly discerned that she had been revealed as a false leader and should be exposed and reported according to the truth principles, but I worried that she would hold it against me and that would make it difficult to interact with her going forward. As a result, to maintain our relationship, I acted like a people pleaser, looking the other way as she caused disruptions and disturbances in the church and inflicted damage on the church's work. As for myself, I was spurned by God and fell into darkness and suffered greatly. God's words described my behavior well: **"They are acting as Satan's accomplice, its attendant and follower. They are disloyal in their duty and responsibility, but to Satan, they are quite loyal."** God had graced me with the opportunity to perform my duty

as a leader with the expectation that I would consider His intentions and protect the church's work, but in the most crucial moment, I didn't live up to this expectation. Indeed, I even helped the enemy while living off the church, protecting a false leader and acting as an accomplice to Satan. How God must have despised and abhorred my actions! I thought to myself, "I knew I should report the false leader for disrupting and disturbing the church's work and felt guilty for not doing so. I wanted to practice the truth, so why couldn't I do it? By what was I being controlled?"

Later on, I came across this passage of God's words: **"Until people have experienced God's work and understood the truth, it is Satan's nature that takes charge and dominates them from within. What, specifically, does that nature entail? For example, why are you selfish? Why do you protect your own position? Why do you have such strong feelings? Why do you enjoy those unrighteous things? Why do you like those evils? What is the basis for your fondness for such things? Where do these things come from? Why are you so happy to accept them? By now, you have all come to understand that the main reason behind all these things is that Satan's poison is within man. So what is Satan's poison? How can it be expressed? For example, if you ask, 'How should people live? What should people live for?' people will answer, 'Every man for himself and the devil take the hindmost.' This single phrase expresses the very root of the problem. Satan's philosophy and logic have become people's lives. No matter what people pursue, they do so for themselves—and so they live only for themselves. 'Every man for himself and the devil take the hindmost'—this is the life philosophy of man, and it also represents human nature. ... Man's satanic nature contains a great deal of satanic philosophies and poisons. Sometimes you yourself are not even aware of them, and do not understand them;**

nevertheless, every moment of your life is based on these things. Moreover, you think that these things are quite correct and reasonable, and not at all mistaken. This suffices to show that Satan's philosophies have become people's nature, and that they are living in complete accord with them, thinking this way of living to be good, and without any sense of repentance at all. Therefore, they are constantly revealing their satanic nature, and they are constantly living by Satan's philosophies. Satan's nature is humanity's life, and it is humanity's nature essence" (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. How to Walk the Path of Peter). Through God's words, I learned that the root of my people pleasing behavior was that I lived according to Satan's poisons such as "Every man for himself and the devil take the hindmost," "Keeping silent on the faults of good friends makes for a long and good friendship," "If you strike others, don't strike them in the face; if you call others out, don't call out their shortcomings," etc. These poisons had already taken root in my heart and I lived according to them, always seeking to maintain my relationships. I became increasingly selfish, deceitful and lacking in a human semblance in order to preserve face. These poisons had become my very nature and all my actions were controlled by them. I clearly knew the truth, but I just couldn't practice it. Before I began believing in God, no matter who I was interacting, I would always rather take a loss in my words and actions as long as I could maintain my relationship with that person and leave them with a good impression. After believing in God, I continued to live by these satanic poisons. In order to maintain my relationship with Wang Ran, I didn't mention her issues to her when I noticed them and didn't expose and report her even after clearly seeing she had been revealed to be a false leader, leading to damages to the church's work. I realized that I was a deceitful person, ingratiating and sycophantic. Focused on my

efforts to maintain relationships with others, I didn't give the slightest consideration to the work of God's house or the life entry of my brothers and sisters. I wasn't doing my duty at all; I was doing evil! I would rather offend God than my fellow men. In my quest to protect my own interests, I failed to practice the truth, didn't act according to principle and served as Satan's lackey, allowing a false leader to damage the church's work as they pleased. How detestable! It was only then that I realized that people pleasers are bad-hearted and God loathes them! If I didn't repent, I would certainly be spurned and eliminated by God.

Later on, I saw another passage of God's words that said: **"If you have the motivations and perspective of a people pleaser, then, in all matters, you will be incapable of practicing the truth and abiding by principle, and you will always fail and fall down. If you do not awaken and do not ever seek the truth, then you are a disbeliever, and you will never gain the truth and life. What, then, should you do? When faced with such things, you must pray to God and call out to Him, begging for salvation and asking that He give you more faith and strength and enable you to abide by the principles, do what you should do, handle things according to the principles, stand firm in the position you should stand in, protect the interests of God's house, and prevent any harm from coming to the work of God's house. If you are able to rebel against your self-interests, your pride, and your standpoint of a people pleaser, and if you do what you should do with an honest, undivided heart, then you will have defeated Satan and gained this aspect of the truth"** (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. Part Three). **"All of you say you are considerate of God's burden and will defend the testimony of the church, but who among you has really been considerate of God's burden? Ask yourself: Are you someone who has shown consideration for His burden? Can**

you practice righteousness for Him? Can you stand up and speak for Me? Can you steadfastly put the truth into practice? Are you bold enough to fight against all of Satan's deeds? Would you be able to set your feelings aside and expose Satan for the sake of My truth? Can you allow My intentions to be satisfied in you? Have you offered up your heart in the most crucial of moments? Are you someone who follows My will? Ask yourself these questions, and think about them often" (The

Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. Utterances of Christ in the Beginning, Chapter 13).

Through God's words, I realized that reporting and exposing false leaders is the duty and responsibility of every one of God's chosen people and is a positive thing. Doing so protects the church's work from obstruction, allows brothers and sisters to have a good church life, and helps false leaders to truly understand their actions and repent to God in a timely fashion. As for me, I fallaciously believed that reporting a false leader would be offensive to that person and so, despite clearly seeing that Wang Ran didn't do real work, I failed to report and expose her, leading each of the church's projects to be obstructed. This was very serious negligence. I had to stop living by satanic philosophy in my maintenance of relationships with others. I had to stand with God, handle affairs according to principle, protect the church's work and act with a sense of justice. Only in so doing would I be in accord with God's intention. I then prayed to God, saying, "Oh God! Time after time, You've given me opportunities to practice the truth, but I've continually lived in a corrupt disposition, protecting myself and failing to satisfy You. This time, I am no longer willing to live by people pleasers' philosophy for worldly dealings and will write a letter to expose Wang Ran." Just as I was preparing to write my report, my leader invited me over for a gathering and I proceeded to inform them of all the issues Wang Ran was having. I also opened up about how I had been a people pleaser during

that time, had failed to practice the truth and had caused damages to the church's interests.

After looking into the matter and investigating, Wang Ran was found to be a false leader who failed to do real work and should be dismissed. On the day of Wang Ran's dismissal, after the leader finished their exposure of her behavior, they asked me to give my comments. I felt a bit worried, "If I expose her, she'll certainly hold it against me and think that she was only dismissed because I had reported her problems. Won't that make it hard to interact with her going forward?" I realized I was once again trying to maintain a personal relationship and acting like a people pleaser, so I silently prayed to God. I then recalled a passage of God's words: **"God has bestowed so much truth upon people, has led you for such a long time, and has provided so much for you, for the purpose of you bearing witness and safeguarding the work of the church. It turns out, when evil people and antichrists do evil deeds and disturb the work of the church, you become timid and withdraw, fleeing with your arms over your head—you are a good-for-nothing. You cannot overcome Satans, you have not borne witness, and God detests you. In this critical moment, you must stand up and wage war against Satans, expose the evil deeds of antichrists, condemn and curse them, giving them no place to hide and cleansing them away from the church. Only this can be counted as gaining victory over Satans and ending their fate"** (The Word, Vol. 4. Exposing Antichrists. Item Nine (Part Eight)). God's words gave me the power to practice the truth. I thought of how, in the past, I had lost so many opportunities to practice the truth because I had wanted to protect myself and would try to read people's expressions and inclinations and act accordingly. This time, I had to rely upon God to practice the truth, expose all of Wang Ran's issues and help her to reflect on and come to know

herself. Realizing this, I proceeded to point out all of Wang Ran's issues, one by one, and felt particularly at ease in the process.

Through this experience I've realized that being a people pleaser is harmful to myself and others and God particularly spurns such people. God does not perfect people pleasers—God likes honest people who have clear convictions about what they like and do not like and have a sense of justice and are able to protect the interests of God's house. Only such people do their duty in a way that accords with God's intentions and can attain salvation.

18. How to Be Freed From Low Self-Esteem

By Mi Jing, China

When I was a child, because I didn't like talking or greeting people, my parents would often say to their relatives and friends, "Something's wrong with this kid. She must be slow." Adults would also say things like, "Look how sharp and charming your sister is, but you, you're as dull as they come." Gradually, I began to feel worthless, the lowest of the low. I didn't dare say anything in classes either, because I was afraid of others laughing at me for saying stupid things. I was so envious of people who were eloquent and quick-witted, and I thought everyone liked people like this.

When I joined the faith, I was initially really nervous to fellowship on God's words in gatherings, afraid that I wouldn't fellowship well and that the others would laugh at me, so I didn't say much at gatherings. But brothers and sisters would often encourage me to fellowship more, and when they opened up and fellowshiped on their experience and understanding, I saw that nobody laughed at anybody. This made me feel less constrained, so I started talking more. Later on, I was elected as a preacher to be in charge of several churches. This came as a real surprise to me. I felt that for someone as inarticulate as me to be a preacher was God's grace. I had to do this job as best as I could and live up to God's expectations for me. One time, a leader arranged for me and two other preachers to gather with her. I saw that the other preachers were very enlightened in their fellowshiping of God's words and that they spoke in such a logical way. I was so envious of them. I thought, "Next to their caliber and eloquence, I don't even compare. Why am I so dull? I can't even speak well." These thoughts made me feel a little despondent.

Although I had achieved some enlightenment when pondering God's words, when I thought about how bad I was at organizing my speech, I feared being laughed at, so I didn't dare fellowship. On top of that, I later ran into some difficulties with work, so I ended up living in a negative state, determined that I was no good and that I couldn't do this duty well. The work also wasn't getting good results. After a while, I was transferred from this duty, and put in charge of just one church.

When I first started working with the two sisters from this church, I didn't feel that I was doing too bad. I was pretty active in my duty and able to feel the Holy Spirit's enlightenment and guidance. Not long after, one sister chose to resign because she couldn't complete any real work and the other sister was transferred to another duty because she was lacking in caliber. After this, Brother Zhang Tong and Sister An Qing were chosen to be my partners. I found the way Zhang Tong fellowshiped about his experiential knowledge was very practical and clear, and that he had good caliber. An Qing was also able to resolve real problems with her fellowship at gatherings. Looking at their strengths, I felt deeply inferior. Later on, during work discussions, I found myself being constantly overcautious and I'd just go along with whatever they said. Sometimes I felt their views were unsuitable, and wanted to point them out, but I'd immediately think about my poor caliber and lack of perceptiveness, so I would dismiss my own opinion. Also, on several occasions, they didn't approve of my views, reinforcing my feelings of inadequacy and causing me to express myself even less. I was even passive in some key tasks, because I was worried about delaying work if I did a bad job. One time, Zhang Tong proposed putting Sister Zhang Can in charge of watering work. I knew Zhang Can pretty well. She was consistently perfunctory and lacked a burden in her duty, and had been dismissed before for not doing real work. She still had

no knowledge of herself and was not suited to take charge of such an important job. In a quiet voice, I put forward my views. Zhang Tong went to meet with Zhang Can after hearing this. Then he told me he'd assessed the situation and found that Zhang Can had some self-reflection and self-knowledge now, and that we had to look at people's potential, not just their past. An Qing endorsed this view of his. I felt that Zhang Tong hadn't been a leader for long, still didn't grasp some principles, and didn't know Zhang Can that well. He was judging her by just one meeting, and may not have made an accurate assessment. I wanted to recommend that he examine how she had been doing her duty or reassess her after talking to others who knew her well. But I then thought, "Zhang Tong has good caliber and has been able to solve some problems. Perhaps Zhang Can has realized her problems after his fellowship. And An Qing has given her approval as well. I'm lacking in caliber and don't see things as clearly; it's best I keep quiet." So, I didn't insist any further. Later on, Zhang Can was dismissed again for not doing real work. Seeing that the watering work was delayed and impacted, I was pretty upset. If I'd just been more insistent in the beginning and drawn on principles to fellowship with Zhang Tong, we wouldn't have had this type of problem. Though I felt guilty, I didn't reflect on my problem. It wasn't until a few more things happened that I finally reflected on myself.

At a gathering, Zhang Tong recommended Brother Zheng Yi as the watering group leader. I felt that although Zheng Yi was enthusiastic, he had just joined the faith and was still unclear on the truth of visions. I felt that he should be cultivated first, as being a group leader might be too much responsibility all at once. So, I stated my views on the matter, but to my surprise, Zhang Tong then said to me, "Why are you being so difficult and obstructive? Can't we first meet him and investigate him?" Hearing him say

this, I felt a flush of embarrassment and was very upset. I thought, “Zhang Tong has good caliber and knows how to do work. My caliber is poor and I can’t see through people or matters. If I keep insisting on my opinion and work really does get obstructed, what then? It’d be for the best if I just stopped insisting.” After the gathering, I thought about what Zhang Tong said, and it made me very upset. I felt that I was too lacking in caliber to do this job, so maybe I should acknowledge my limitations and resign as soon as I could. After learning about it, the leader drew on her experience to help me. With the leader’s fellowship, I began to reflect on why I kept wanting to resign and why I was always living in such a despondent state. Later on, I read God’s words: **“All people have some incorrect states within them, like negativity, weakness, despondency, and fragility; or they have base intents; or they are constantly troubled by their pride, selfish desires, and self-interest; or they think that they are of poor caliber, and they experience some negative states. It will be very hard for you to obtain the work of the Holy Spirit if you always live in these states. If it is hard for you to obtain the work of the Holy Spirit, then the active elements within you will be few, and the negative elements will come out and disturb you. People always rely on their own will to repress those negative and adverse states, but no matter how they repress them, they cannot shake them off. The main reason for this is that people cannot thoroughly discern these negative and adverse things; they cannot see their essence clearly. This makes it very hard for them to rebel against the flesh and Satan. Also, people always get stuck in these negative, melancholic, and degenerate states, and they do not pray or look up to God, instead they just muddle through them. As a result, the Holy Spirit does not work in them, and they are consequently unable to understand the truth, they lack a path in everything they do, and they**

cannot see any matter clearly” (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. Freedom and Liberation Can Be Gained Only by Casting Off One’s Corrupt Disposition). Reading God’s words made things clear to me. The main reason I was always in a negative and gloomy state was because I was bound by things like vanity and selfish desires. Often, when fellowshiping God’s words in gatherings, I’d be able to glean some enlightenment, but I’d always feel inarticulate and bad at phrasing things. I was so worried that I wouldn’t fellowship well and that others would look down on me, so I didn’t dare to say anything, causing the bit of enlightenment I received to be lost. When I saw how high-caliber and eloquent other preachers were and how poorly I could express myself, I thought my caliber was too poor and felt embarrassed. Then I became negative and slacked off in my duty, didn’t get any results, and eventually was reassigned. This time was the same. I saw that my partners had good caliber and fellowshiped better than me. During work discussions, I was so afraid of losing face or being looked down on for not speaking well, so I didn’t dare speak my mind. Sometimes, when my correct ideas and views weren’t adopted, I didn’t dare stand up for my views, and only thought of saving my face. I was controlled by these negative emotions and even wanted to excuse myself from my duty. I really placed too much importance on vanity and pride! If I carried on like this, I’d never gain the Holy Spirit’s work, and I’d have no way to understand or gain the truth! So I prayed to God, asking Him to enlighten and guide me to know myself and turn my state around.

Later, I read God’s words: **“Antichrists’ cherishment of their reputation and status goes beyond that of normal people, and is something within their disposition essence; it is not a temporary interest, or the transient effect of their surroundings—it is something within their life, their bones, and so it is their essence. This is to say**

that in everything antichrists do, their first consideration is their own reputation and status, nothing else. For antichrists, reputation and status are their life, and their lifelong goal. In all they do, their first consideration is: ‘What will happen to my status? And to my reputation? Will doing this give me a good reputation? Will it elevate my status in people’s minds?’ That is the first thing they think about, which is ample proof that they have the disposition and essence of antichrists; they would not consider these problems otherwise. It can be said that for antichrists, reputation and status are not some additional requirement, much less something extraneous that they could do without. They are part of the nature of antichrists, they are in their bones, in their blood, they are innate to them. Antichrists are not indifferent toward whether they possess reputation and status; this is not their attitude. Then, what is their attitude? Reputation and status are intimately connected to their daily lives, to their daily state, to what they pursue on a daily basis” (The Word, Vol. 4. Exposing Antichrists. Item Nine (Part Three)). From God’s words I saw that antichrists really cherish reputation and status. These two things motivate everything they do. This is a result of their antichrist essence. It also corresponded to how I was behaving. Ever since childhood, I’d felt nothing I did was any good. I felt constrained, and I was overcautious in everything I did. This was mainly because I wanted to save face and not have others look down on me. Why did I cherish my status and face so much? The root causes were satanic poisons like “People need their pride just as a tree needs its bark,” and “A man leaves his name behind wherever he stays, just as a goose utters its cry wherever it flies,” which made me place so much importance on my vanity and pride. I just wanted to leave a good impression on others, and believed that this was the only way to have meaning in life. So no matter where I was or who I was

with, if there was a possibility of me losing face, I would choose to run away, thereby protecting my face and status. While working with Zhang Tong, I saw my view being rejected and felt I'd lost face. I worried that if I remained as a leader, I'd only be embarrassed further, so I wanted to have the leader reassign me to another duty. In fact, on closer consideration, me being able to be a leader was God's grace. I should've considered His intention, resolved others' real difficulties, and protected the church's work. But I wasn't thinking about how to do my duty well, and only protected my face and status. When I lost these things, I became negative and stopped trying hard. I was truly without conscience or reason. Outwardly, I wasn't vying for status or disturbing and disrupting church work like an antichrist, but on a matter as important as selecting and using people, I didn't dare stick to principles, and tried to preserve my face and status at all times. What I had revealed was an antichrist's disposition. I realized the seriousness of my problem, and so I prayed and repented to God.

After this, I opened up to a sister about my state and she gave me some of God's words to read. Almighty God says: **“How should people's caliber be measured? It should be measured based on the degree to which they comprehend God's words and the truth. This is the most accurate way of doing it. Some people are silver-tongued, quick-witted, and especially skilled at handling other people—but when they listen to sermons, they are never able to understand anything, and when they read God's words, they do not comprehend them. When they talk about their experiential testimony, they always speak words and doctrines, revealing themselves to be mere amateurs, and giving others the sense that they have no spiritual understanding. These are people of poor caliber”** (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. To Fulfill One's Duty Well, Understanding the Truth Is Most Crucial). **“Would you say Paul had caliber?**

Which class did Paul's caliber belong to? (It was very good.) You have heard so many sermons but still do not understand. Could Paul's caliber be considered very good? (No, it was poor.) Why was Paul's caliber poor? (He did not know himself and couldn't comprehend God's words.) It was because he did not comprehend the truth. He, too, had heard the sermons given by the Lord Jesus, and during the period he worked there was, of course, the work of the Holy Spirit. So how was it that, when he did all that work, wrote all those epistles, and traveled to all those churches, he still understood nothing of the truth and preached nothing but doctrine? What sort of caliber was that? A poor caliber. What's more, Paul persecuted the Lord Jesus and arrested His disciples, after which the Lord Jesus struck him down with a great light from heaven. How did Paul approach and understand this great event that befell him? His mode of understanding was different from Peter's. He thought, 'The lord Jesus struck me down, I have sinned, so I must work harder to make up for this, and once my merits have balanced out my demerits, I shall be rewarded.' Did he know himself? He did not. He did not say, 'I opposed the Lord Jesus because of my malicious nature, my nature of an antichrist. I opposed the Lord Jesus—there's nothing good about me!' Did he possess such knowledge of himself? (No.) ... He had not the slightest regret, much less any knowledge of himself. He had neither of these things. This shows that there was a problem with Paul's caliber and that he did not have the ability to comprehend the truth" (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. To Fulfill One's Duty Well, Understanding the Truth Is Most Crucial). God's words allowed me to understand that it isn't in line with the truth at all to measure a person's caliber based on their apparent eloquence, gifts and intelligence. Just like Paul; he was gifted, eloquent, and spread the gospel throughout most of

Europe, but he couldn't comprehend the truth, much less understand himself. He committed such great evils and never had any true self-knowledge or remorse. Instead, he just wanted to be rewarded and enter God's kingdom by doing much work. Paul was unable to understand the truth and was a person of poor caliber. I'd always thought if a person could speak well and was smart, then their caliber was good, so I always judged myself by this standard. When I couldn't meet this standard, I thought my caliber was lacking and that I couldn't do the work of a leader. Then, when I ran into difficulties, I didn't seek the truth to resolve them but became negative and slacked off, and eventually, even problems I could have solved remained unsolved. I'd been so foolish in not understanding the truth. Though my caliber wasn't great, I was able to understand God's words and had some knowledge of the corrupt disposition I was revealing. I was also able to draw on God's words to resolve difficulties that others were having in their life entry, so it wasn't as if my caliber was so poor that I was incapable of doing my duty. Realizing these things, my mindset changed somewhat and I could do my duty normally.

Later on, I read a couple of passages of God's words that described my state very well. Almighty God says: **"There are some people who, as children, were ordinary-looking, inarticulate, and not very quick-witted, causing others in their families and social environments to give rather unfavorable appraisals of them, saying things like: 'This kid is dull-witted, slow, and a clumsy speaker. Look at other people's children, who are so well-spoken that they can wrap people around their little finger. Whereas this kid just pouts all day long. He doesn't know what to say when meeting people, doesn't know how to explain or justify himself after doing something wrong, and can't amuse people. This kid is an idiot.'** The parents say this, relatives and friends say this,

and their teachers also say this. This environment exerts a certain, invisible pressure on such individuals. Through experiencing these environments, they unconsciously develop a certain kind of mindset. What kind of mindset? They think that they are not good-looking, not very likable, and that others are never happy to see them. They believe that they are not good at studying, are slow, and always feel embarrassed to open their mouths and speak in front of others. They are too embarrassed to say thank you when people give them something, thinking to themselves, ‘Why am I always so tongue-tied? Why are other people such smooth talkers? I’m just stupid!’ ... After growing up in such an environment, this mindset of inferiority gradually takes over. It turns into a kind of lingering emotion that becomes tangled with your heart and fills your mind. Regardless of whether you are already grown, have gone out into the world, are married and established in your career, and regardless of your social status, this feeling of inferiority that was planted in your environment growing up is impossible to get rid of. Even after you start believing in God and join the church, you still think that you have average looks, have poor intellectual caliber, are inarticulate, and cannot do anything. You think, ‘I’ll just do what I can. I don’t need to aspire to be a leader, I don’t need to pursue profound truths, I’ll just be content with being the least significant one, and let others treat me however they like’” (The Word, Vol. 6. On the Pursuit of the Truth I. How to Pursue the Truth (1)). “When feelings of inferiority are implanted deeply in your heart, they not only have a profound effect on you, they also dominate your views on people and things, and your comportment and actions. So, how do those who are dominated by feelings of inferiority perceive people and things? They regard other people as better than themselves, and they also view

antichrists as being better than themselves. Even though antichrists have evil dispositions and are of poor humanity, they still treat them as people to emulate and role models to learn from. They even say to themselves, ‘Look, although they have a bad disposition and evil humanity, they are gifted and are more capable in work than me. They can comfortably display their abilities in front of others and speak in front of so many people without blushing or having heart palpitations. They’ve really got guts. I can’t match up to them. I’m just not brave enough.’ What brought this on? It must be said that part of the reason is that your feelings of inferiority have affected your judgment of people’s essences, as well as your perspective and standpoint when it comes to viewing other people. Is this not the case? (It is.) So how do feelings of inferiority affect how you comport yourself? You tell yourself: ‘I was born stupid, with no gifts or strengths, and I am slow to learn everything. Look at that person: Although they sometimes cause disruptions and disturbances, and act arbitrarily and recklessly, at least they are gifted and have strengths. Wherever you go, they’re the kind of person that people want to make use of, and I’m not.’ Whenever anything happens, the first thing you do is pass a verdict on yourself and close yourself off. Whatever the issue is, you retreat and avoid taking initiative, and you fear taking on responsibility. You tell yourself, ‘I was born stupid. No matter where I go, no one likes me. I can’t stick my neck out, I mustn’t show off my minuscule abilities. If someone recommends me, that proves that I’m alright. But if no one recommends me, then it wouldn’t do for me to take the initiative to say that I can take on the job and do it well. If I’m not confident about it, I can’t say that I am—what if I mess it up, what would I do then? What if I got pruned? I’d be so ashamed! Wouldn’t that be humiliating? I

can't let that happen to me.' Take a look—has it not affected your comportment? To a certain extent, your attitude toward how you comport yourself is influenced and controlled by your feelings of inferiority. To a certain extent, it can be called a consequence of your feelings of inferiority” (The Word, Vol. 6. On the Pursuit of the Truth I. How to Pursue the Truth (1)). Having read God's words, I felt that God truly understands us. What He exposed is precisely the way I think. It seemed that the importance I placed on face wasn't the only reason for my despondency; there was another reason for this. Because of the influence of people and things around me, I'd developed feelings of inferiority, become unable to view myself correctly, and always felt nothing I did was any good, so I was overcautious, repressed, and restrained in everything I did. I thought back on how I'd not liked speaking as a child, and how I was often despised and called dull or stupid by adults. But in reality, I did have my own opinions, even though I didn't voice them at the time; it's just that I didn't speak for fear of losing face. I didn't dare say anything in classes, not because I didn't understand, but because I felt I was inarticulate, which made me too scared to speak. When reading God's words in gatherings, I was able to glean some enlightenment, but when I thought of how I lacked eloquence, I didn't dare fellowship. Also, when I saw Zhang Tong not keeping to principles in choosing and using people, I wanted to remind him about it, but when I thought of how good his caliber was and how nothing I did was any good, I just went ahead and rejected my ideas, without seeking, discussing or looking into things further, and as a result, the work suffered losses. I was living with an inferiority complex and had a passive, negative attitude toward everything. I wasn't judging myself or others according to God's words, but only according to my own views. My feelings of inferiority dominated how I viewed things and viewed people, and they influenced my

judgment and my path of pursuit. These feelings of inferiority had seriously harmed me. Immediately after this, I read more of God's words: **"This emotion of yours is not only negative, to be more accurate, it is actually in opposition to God and the truth. You might think that this is an emotion within normal humanity, but in God's eyes, this is not just a simple matter of emotion, but a method of opposition to God. It is a method marked by negative emotions that people use to resist God, God's words and the truth"** (The Word, Vol. 6. On the Pursuit of the Truth I. How to Pursue the Truth (1)). Having read God's words, I saw the serious nature of feelings of inferiority and the harm they cause, and that they're no less damaging to a person than a corrupt disposition. Living with this kind of inferiority complex is in direct opposition to God and the truth, and if it isn't resolved, it ruins a person's chance at salvation. I had been ensnared in these feelings of inferiority since childhood, and always felt nothing I did was any good. When I was around people with good caliber in particular, I saw myself as even more lacking, I felt repressed and pained, and blamed God for not giving me good caliber or intelligence. I was dissatisfied with God's sovereignty and arrangements and refused to accept them, which was essentially defying God! How could I not be eliminated if I carried on like this? Only when I realized these things did I finally feel that it was too dangerous to live with an inferiority complex, that I couldn't carry on like this, and that I had to cast these feelings off.

Later on, I read more of God's words: **"How can you accurately evaluate and know yourself, and break away from the feeling of inferiority? You should take God's words as the basis for gaining knowledge of yourself, learning what your humanity, caliber, and talent are like, and what strengths you have. For example, suppose that you used to like singing and did it well, but some people kept criticizing you**

and belittling you, saying that you were tone-deaf and that your singing was out of tune, so now you feel that you cannot sing well and no longer dare to do it in front of others. Because those worldly folks, those muddleheaded people and mediocre people, made inaccurate evaluations and judgments about you, the rights that your humanity deserves were curtailed, and your talent was stifled. As a result, you do not dare to even sing a song, and you are only brave enough to let go and sing out loud when no one is around or you are just by yourself. Because you ordinarily feel so horribly repressed, when you are not alone you dare not sing a song; you dare to sing only when you are alone, enjoying the time when you can sing out loud and clear, and what a wonderful, liberating time that is! Is that not so? Because of the harm that people have done to you, you do not know or cannot see clearly what it is that you can actually do, what you are good at, and what you are not good at. In this kind of situation, you must make a correct evaluation and take the correct measure of yourself according to God's words. You should establish what you have learned and where your strengths lie, and go out and do whatever it is that you can do; as for those things which you cannot do, your shortcomings and deficiencies, you should reflect on and know them, and you should also accurately evaluate and know what your caliber is like, and whether it is good or bad. If you cannot understand or gain clear knowledge of your own problems, then ask the people around you with understanding to make an appraisal of you. Regardless of whether what they say is accurate, it will at least give you something to reference and consider and will enable you to have a basic judgment or characterization of yourself. You can then solve the essential problem of negative emotions like inferiority, and gradually emerge from them.

Such feelings of inferiority are easy to resolve if one can discern them, awaken to them, and seek the truth” (The Word, Vol. 6. On the Pursuit of the Truth I. How to Pursue the Truth (1)). Having read God’s words, I found a way to let go of these feelings of inferiority. I had to use God’s words to understand and measure myself, and I could also ask people who knew me well to evaluate me. So I prayed to God, “God! I now know how dangerous living with an inferiority complex is. I want to cast off these feelings, so please help me.” Later, I asked my partners to evaluate me. They said, “Seeing as how you can comprehend God’s words purely, and you’re able to fellowship God’s words in relation to your corruptions and state, and help others resolve their real issues, you aren’t as incompetent as you say. Even though your caliber isn’t great, so long as you put your heart into doing things, you can do real work.” Hearing my brothers and sisters say this made me feel a little more at ease, and I thought, “Though I’m not as good at expressing myself as some of the others, everyone can understand me in my fellowship. I shouldn’t feel constrained. I should just fellowship as much as I’m able to. I shouldn’t just think of how to make others admire me; I have to focus on how to fellowship practically to resolve problems and benefit the brothers and sisters. Also, though my caliber is lacking, by practicing more, I can make up for my shortcomings and improve my caliber. I shouldn’t compare myself with others or become negative and sell myself short. I have to seek entry with a positive attitude.” Realizing these things, I was able to treat myself correctly and my mindset became much better in doing my duty.

I was chosen as a preacher again recently. This was unexpected, and I worried I wouldn’t be able to do it. Then, I recalled that God’s words say: **“You should take God’s words as the basis for gaining knowledge of yourself, learning what your humanity, caliber, and talent are like, and what strengths you have”** (The Word, Vol. 6. On the Pursuit of the Truth I. How to Pursue

the Truth (1)). I have to measure things by God's words. The reason I didn't do this duty well before wasn't only due to a lack of caliber. It was mainly because I was living with an inferiority complex, not putting my heart into cooperating, and unable to gain the Holy Spirit's work. I couldn't keep living with these feelings of inferiority, thinking about my face and status. Since my brothers and sisters chose me, I should do my best to cooperate, and if there were things I didn't understand, I should rely on God more and seek help from others. With this mindset, I felt much more relaxed and liberated. Shortly after, a sister in charge of gospel work came to check our work. I saw that she was very capable in her work and in fellowshiping the truth, and she pointed out a lot of deviations and oversights in our work. I was scared that she'd say I was incompetent, but I quickly realized I was considering my face and status again, so I prayed to God to rebel against myself, and wanted to learn more from this sister and make up for my shortcomings. After this, while discussing work, I didn't hold back in expressing my views, and by communicating with her, I gained some paths of practice. Through the guidance of God's words, I escaped from the confines of my inferiority complex.

19. Does Being Understanding Mean Having Good Humanity?

By Wang Yin, China

In 2016, Sister Ding Rui and I were partnered to oversee several churches' work. Not long after that, an upper leader had Ding Rui go to a church to take care of a report letter there. However, she came back in no time. I was thinking the issue there was complicated. She came back after so little time—did she resolve the issue? Unsurprisingly, a letter came for Ding Rui from the upper leader before long and said that she hadn't fully resolved the problem and someone else needed to go look into it again. The leader told Ding Rui to do some real self-reflection and learn a lesson from that. Ding Rui got pretty down after reading that, and said, "I can't fix real problems in my duty and I delayed the church's work." I knew a bit about what was in that report letter, and it was a fairly complex issue. It involved lots of people and would require fellowship on plenty of things. Those involved had to be spoken with individually, so it couldn't be fully done quickly. I wondered if Ding Rui was too eager to wrap things up. I thought about pointing it out to her, and helping her self-reflect and know herself. But then I thought that she was already feeling sad, and if I pointed out her problems, she might feel embarrassed and become even more negative. And then what if she said I lacked empathy, and she grew distant and biased against me? We were newly partnered, so it would be hard to get along if things got tense between us. At a time like that, if I said some comforting, encouraging things she'd feel I was understanding and easy to get along with. So I consoled her saying, "It's totally normal for us to make mistakes and fail sometimes in our work. Don't be too hard on yourself. When I was new to handling report letters, I had worse failures than you." Then I told

her about my experiences of failure in my work. That anxious look immediately disappeared from her face, and she said happily, “I was worried about what you’d think of me. I hadn’t imagined you were such a sweet person.” I was really pleased with myself when I heard her say that. I felt like I had good humanity and was understanding. Another time, Ding Rui told me about how she and a sister hadn’t been able to work well together. She always talked about the other sister’s problems, and she seemed really angry when she talked about it. I noticed she was kind of petty and lacked self-awareness. I remembered hearing the leader talk before about them not getting along. The other sister had an arrogant disposition, but Ding Rui loved nitpicking, and when things came up, she didn’t accept them from God. She’d pull a long face and ignore whoever injured her pride. She didn’t discuss work with them and vented her anger through it, delaying progress on it. The leader fellowshiped with her, but she didn’t self-reflect or learn anything about herself. That other sister had some problems, but Ding Rui’s problems were worse. I wanted to point out her issues, but then I wondered, “If I bring it up, not sparing any words, would she say I was treating her unfairly? Then wouldn’t I lose the good impression she had of me?” So I went along with her, saying, “The sister you partnered with also had some problems in some areas.”

Ding Rui’s duty was changed later on, and she took on different work. I got a different partner. As soon as she saw me, she said, “When I heard I was going to work with you, it felt like a lot of pressure. I’ve heard you have good humanity and work well with everyone. If our partnership is rocky, I’ll be totally revealed. It’ll definitely be a problem with my humanity.” When she said that, rather than self-reflecting, I just patted myself on the back. I felt like I really did have good humanity. And once, a sister that partnered with Ding Rui saw me and said, “She and I don’t work

well together, but she always says how well the two of you worked together. I guess I'm really corrupt." I was thinking that Ding Rui's pride couldn't take it because that sister was too blunt, too direct about Ding Rui's problems. While interacting with Ding Rui, I was tolerant and patient about her issues and didn't argue with her. I proactively discussed any work issues with her and sought out her suggestions a lot. That prevented any conflict. Not long after that, I heard the leader say that Ding Rui was pretty arrogant and didn't accept truths—she never worked well with others. She was dismissed because she didn't change after fellowship and was ineffective in her duty. The leader brought up my problems later on, saying, "As a leader, no matter how serious a brother's or sister's problem is, if you never bring it up or prune and expose them, but always coddle your relationships, that's irresponsible in your work! That's how you were with Ding Rui. She can't work well with anyone else, but she's happy to work with you, saying you're considerate and understanding. You should reflect on this!" Then another leader said, "Everyone's assessments of you lately have been positive, saying you're understanding and pleasant. Everyone has a place for you in their heart and they don't seek truths in things. That's an issue with you. Working in this way, you're not exalting God and bearing witness to Him." I had a hard time taking it at first, was brought to tears, feeling wronged, and made excuses in my heart. The others having good things to say about me meant I had good humanity and was easy to get along with. How could they say that I had a problem? Then my partnered sister also reminded me to do some self-reflection, so I finally prayed to God peacefully, asking Him to enlighten me to know myself.

I read two passages of God's words later which said: **"When interacting with the brothers and sisters, you must lay your heart bare to them and confide in them in order for it to benefit you. When**

performing your duty, it is even more important to lay your heart bare and confide in people; only then will you work well together. ... When you interact with others, you must first have them perceive your true heart and sincerity. If, in speaking and working together and making contact with others, someone's words are perfunctory, grandiloquent, pleasantries, flattery, irresponsible, and imaginary, or if they simply speak to seek the other's favor, then their words lack all credibility, and they are not sincere in the least. This is their mode of interaction with others, no matter who those others are. Such a person does not have an honest heart. This is not an honest person. Say someone is in a negative state, and they say to you sincerely: 'Tell me why, exactly, I'm so negative. I just can't figure it out!' And suppose you do, in fact, understand their problem in your heart, but you do not tell them, instead saying: 'It's nothing. You're not being negative; I get that way, too.' These words are a great consolation to that person, but your attitude is not sincere. You are being perfunctory with them; so as to make them feel more comfortable and consoled, you have refrained from speaking honestly with them. You are not helping them in earnest and putting their problem plainly, so that they can leave their negativity behind. You have not done what an honest person should. All for the sake of trying to console them and make sure there is no estrangement or conflict between you, you have been perfunctory with them—and this is not what it is to be an honest person. So, to be an honest person, what should you do when encountering this kind of situation? You need to tell them what you have seen and identified: 'I will tell you what I have seen and what I have experienced. You decide whether what I say is right or wrong. If it's wrong, you don't have to accept it. If it's right, I hope you will. If I say something that is hard for

you to hear and hurts you, I hope you can accept it from God. My intention and purpose is to help you. I see the issue clearly: Because you feel that you have been humiliated, and no one feeds your ego, and you think everyone else looks down on you, that you are being attacked, and that you have never been so wronged, you can't accept it and become negative. What do you think—is this what's really going on?' And, hearing this, they feel it is indeed the case. This is what is actually in your heart, but if you are not an honest person, you will not say it. You will say, 'I often get negative, too,' and when the other person hears that everyone gets negative, they think it is normal for them to be negative, and, in the end, they do not leave their negativity behind. If you are an honest person and you help them with an honest attitude and an honest heart, you can help them understand the truth and leave their negativity behind" (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. Only an Honest Person Can Live Out True Human Likeness). **"There are many so-called 'good people' in the world who speak high-minded words—although on the surface, they do not seem to have committed any great evil, they are actually especially deceitful and slippery. They are very good at steering wherever the wind blows, speaking smoothly and slickly. They are false good people and hypocrites—they are merely pretending to be good. Those who walk the middle path are the most insidious people of all. They offend no one, they are smooth and slick, they are good at playing along in all situations, and no one can see their faults. They are like living Satans!"** (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. Only by Practicing the Truth Can One Cast Off the Shackles of a Corrupt Disposition). From God's words I learned that if I only say supportive, flattering things in my interactions with others, and don't point out issues I see, that's not truly helping them and won't benefit them at all. God says that's sticking to the

middle ground, being a cunning people pleaser. That's going whichever way the wind blows, gratifying everyone, and offending no one. It's being a living Satan. Reflecting on my own behavior, I saw I was exactly the sort of person that God exposed. When Ding Rui didn't resolve that report letter and the work had to be redone, I knew it was because she was looking for a quick return. I should have pointed out her issue and helped her self-reflect. But I was afraid she'd say I was inconsiderate and lacked humanity. So I said some encouraging words, and even talked about my failures to console her. After I said all that, she wasn't upset anymore and didn't reflect much on her corrupt disposition. It's okay to integrate personal experiences into fellowship to help others, but one should primarily use one's failures and self-knowledge to guide others to reflect and learn about themselves. But that wasn't what I was trying to achieve by sharing my personal failures. My aim was to comfort Ding Rui so that she felt like everyone was equally corrupt and mistakes were totally normal. That subtly allowed her to over-accommodate herself. It wasn't bearing witness to God, but was misleading her. Seeing that Ding Rui couldn't work well with others and was always nitpicking, I didn't point it out to her and even agreed with her about another sister's problems so I could protect my good image. And when I saw her being bratty, I just let her get away with it. As a result, she didn't see her own problems and indulged herself by living within her corrupt disposition. Wasn't that harming her?

I read another passage of God's words later that said: **"There must be a standard for having good humanity. It does not involve taking the path of moderation, not sticking to principles, endeavoring not to offend anyone, currying favor everywhere you go, being smooth and slick with everyone you meet, and making everyone speak well of you. This is not the standard. So, what is the standard? It is being able to**

submit to God and the truth. It is approaching one's duty and all manner of people, events, and things with principles and a sense of responsibility. This is plain for all to see; everyone is clear about this in their heart. Moreover, God scrutinizes people's hearts and knows their situation, each and every one; no matter who they are, no one can fool God. Some people always boast that they possess good humanity, that they never speak ill of others, never harm anyone else's interests, and they claim never to have coveted other people's property. When there is a dispute over interests, they even prefer to suffer loss than take advantage of others, and everyone else thinks they are good people. However, when performing their duties in God's house, they are wily and slippery, always scheming for themselves. Never do they think of the interests of God's house, never do they treat as urgent the things God treats as urgent or think as God thinks, and never can they set aside their own interests so as to perform their duties. They never forsake their own interests. Even when they see evil people committing evil, they do not expose them; they have no principles whatsoever. What kind of humanity is this? It is not good humanity" (The Word, Vol. 3.

The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. In Giving One's Heart to God, One Can Obtain the Truth). A truly good person can accept the truth and submit to God, they're responsible and have a burden in their duty, they uphold principles and protect the church's work. They're also principled toward others. Seeing a brother's or sister's issues or faults, they can offer the appropriate fellowship and help. If someone violates principles and seriously disrupts and disturbs the church's work, they can prune and expose them as they should, and don't act out of feelings and fear of offending them, but can uphold principles and protect church work. That's truly having a good humanity. I used to think that not pruning someone for their mistakes,

exposing their shortcomings, or embarrassing them was being an understanding person with good humanity. For years, no matter who I interacted with, I always chose my words to be comforting and nice. I was always considering how to make others feel I was reasonable and understanding, pandering to their mood, saying heartwarming things. I didn't directly point out others' issues I saw in their duties, and even said pleasant, consoling things to fool them, or put it really gently. Everyone praised me for having good humanity and being easy to get along with. I saw myself as a good person and was proud of that. I realized through the exposure of God's words that for years, the ways that I thought I was being a good person were actually Satan's philosophies for worldly dealings. I seemed to have good humanity—I was accommodating and didn't offend anyone. I stayed on good terms with everyone, but in my heart, I only considered my own interests. I was totally irresponsible toward my work and others' life entry. I wasn't remotely a good person. I was selfish, vile, and a deceitful people-pleaser, a false nice guy. Thinking about how I used to boast about having good humanity and considered myself a good person, I was really too shameless. When I realized this, I said a prayer, "God, Your words have shown me what truly good humanity is. I want to put the truth into practice and be someone with a good humanity."

Next, the church partnered me with Chen Lin and Li Yue to water new believers. Before long I discovered that Li Yue was perfunctory and irresponsible in her duty. She was often busy with personal matters, holding up work. Chen Lin and I fellowshiped with her, having her prioritize things so church work wouldn't be delayed. To my surprise, she didn't accept it, but made excuses and lost her temper. Chen Lin integrated God's words into her fellowship and dissection of her issue, but Li Yue didn't have any self-awareness. She said she lacked stature and couldn't put the truth

into practice. Seeing her act like that, I thought that if I kept on dissecting her problem, she'd definitely say I was demanding, that I didn't have a good humanity and was holding her back. I felt I shouldn't expose her so that we'd keep getting along well. So, I politely reassured her, "Your stature is small, and we can understand. Just don't hold up work in the future." When I said that, Li Yue's furrowed brows relaxed and she wasn't as upset anymore. She became really friendly toward me after that. I was very happy and felt that I did have a good approach for fellowship. Though I pointed out her problem, she still thought well of me. Later on, Li Yue still lacked a burden in her duty, and she even became biased against Chen Lin, saying she was too demanding. Chen Lin pointed out my issue, saying, "Do you know what the nature of your fellowship with Li Yue the other day was? We fellowshipped with her to help her know herself, self-reflect and repent. But what you wrapped up with not only didn't help her reflect, but also made her think you're understanding while I'm too demanding of her. Doing that has a disruptive, undermining nature and it didn't help her at all." Chen Lin's words were gutting for me. In my pain, I prayed to God, "God! Faced with pruning, I didn't realize the seriousness of this issue. But I know that everything I encounter every day is permitted by You. Please enlighten and guide me to know myself."

I read a passage of God's words after that. Almighty God says: **"The first technique that antichrists use to control people is winning over their hearts. How many ways are there to win over people's hearts? One way is to draw them in with small favors. Sometimes antichrists give people some nice things, sometimes they compliment them, sometimes they make little promises to them. And sometimes, antichrists see that some duties can enable people to step into the limelight, or that others think these duties can bring advantages to**

whoever does them and make everyone esteem them, and they assign these duties to those they want to win over. ... Some people are overly sentimental, and they are always constrained by their feelings when doing their duty, and their leader says, 'This is due to your small stature, it's fine.' Some people are lazy and disloyal in their duty, but their leader does not rebuke them, instead they say nice-sounding things that those people want to hear at every turn in order to please them and be called good by them, and to show them how understanding and loving they are. Those people think, 'Our leader is like a loving mother. They truly have love for us—they really do represent God. They really are from God!' The unspoken implication in this is that their leader can act as God's mouthpiece, that they can represent God. Is this the goal of this leader? Perhaps it is not that clear, but one of their goals is obvious: They would have people say that they are a wonderful leader, considerate of others, sympathetic to people's weaknesses, and very understanding of their hearts. When a church leader sees brothers or sisters doing their duties perfunctorily, they may not rebuke them, though they should. When they clearly see that the interests of God's house are suffering, they do not concern themselves with this or make any inquiries, and they do not cause the least offense to others. In fact, they are not really showing consideration for people's weaknesses; instead, their intention and goal is to win over people's hearts. They are fully aware that: 'As long as I do this and don't cause offense to anyone, they'll think I'm a good leader. They'll have a good, high opinion of me. They'll approve of me and like me.' They don't care how much damage is done to the interests of God's house, or how great losses are caused to the life entry of God's chosen people, or how greatly their church life is disturbed, they just

persist in their satanic philosophy and cause no offense to anyone. There is never any self-reproach in their hearts. When they see someone causing disruptions and disturbances, at the very most they might have a few words with them about it, downplaying the issue, and then be done with it. They will not fellowship on the truth, or point out the essence of the problem to that person, less still will they dissect their state, and they will never fellowship what God's intentions are. A false leader never exposes or dissects the errors people frequently make, or the corrupt dispositions people often reveal. They don't solve any real problems, but instead always indulge people's erroneous practices and revelations of corruption, and no matter how negative or weak people are, they do not take this seriously. They merely preach some words and doctrines and speak a few words of exhortation to deal with the situation in a perfunctory manner, trying to maintain harmony. As a result, God's chosen people do not know how to reflect on and know themselves, there is no resolution for whatever corrupt dispositions they reveal, and they live amid words and doctrines, notions and imaginings, without any life entry. They even believe in their hearts, 'Our leader has even more understanding for our weaknesses than God does. Our stature is too small to live up to God's requirements. We just need to fulfill the requirements of our leader; by submitting to our leader, we are submitting to God. If a day comes when the Above dismisses our leader, we will make ourselves heard; to keep our leader and stop them from being dismissed, we will negotiate with the Above and force them into agreeing to our demands. This is how we will do right by our leader.' When people have such thoughts in their hearts, when they have established such a relationship with their leader, and this kind of dependence, envy, and worship has arisen in their hearts

toward their leader, they come to have ever greater faith in this leader, and always want to listen to the leader's words, rather than seeking the truth in God's words. Such a leader has almost taken the place of God in people's hearts. If a leader is willing to maintain such a relationship with God's chosen people, if they derive a feeling of enjoyment from this in their heart, and believe that God's chosen people ought to treat them like this, then there is no difference between this leader and Paul, they have already set foot on the path of an antichrist, and God's chosen people have already been misled by this antichrist, and are completely lacking in discernment" (The Word, Vol. 4. Exposing Antichrists. Item One: They Try to Win Over People's Hearts). God exposes antichrists as incredibly despicable and wicked. To strengthen their place in others' hearts, they never offend people. If they notice someone violating principles, they don't fellowship on the truth to resolve the problem or expose and put a stop to it. Instead, they say nice things to win over others' support, so that others like them, think they're loving, understanding, and forgiving while resisting and disliking God's words and requirements, and not practicing or entering into them. Antichrists bring others before themselves. I reflected on how the nature of my actions was just like an antichrist'. I clearly saw mistakes in brothers' and sisters' duties, even some that were serious and had already impacted the work, so I should have pointed them out. Then they could see the problem's essence and its serious consequences, and repent quickly. But I was afraid exposing people's problems would offend them, so I pandered to their flesh, saying some nice-sounding things to win their support. When fellowshipping and exposing Li Yue's issue, I didn't collaborate with Chen Lin to guide Li Yue to know herself, but was afraid that she'd be biased against me if I spoke sternly, so I went with her feelings, being nice. That made me look more loving than Chen Lin, able to forgive and tolerate her

weaknesses, making Li Yue unable to recognize her own problems and resistant to Chen Lin. That's how I was with Ding Rui, too. I saw her issue, but instead of fellowshiping and helping, guiding her to reflect and see her problem, I always indulged her. I wasn't exalting or bearing witness to God in my duty that way, and I wasn't fulfilling my responsibilities. I was a leader, but when I saw brothers and sisters violating principles by acting based on their corrupt dispositions, I didn't fellowship the truth to resolve the issue, but pandered to their flesh, saying some comforting things to fool them. I indulged them living in corrupt dispositions, accommodating and sparing themselves. The nature of what I did was to keep others from entering into the truth reality. They didn't know the truth or have an understanding of God, and were resistant to and disliked God's demands. But they all thought I was great, saying that I was forgiving and understanding, and they were growing closer to me. Wasn't that misleading people? I saw that by living by satanic philosophies and being a nice guy, I was doing nothing but evil. It looked like I was treating others well, but in fact I was harming brothers and sisters, and delaying church work. I was too hypocritical! I used an underhanded tactic to win the others' admiration and worship. I was on the path of an antichrist! Over those years, I'd given up my family and job to do duties. I'd suffered quite a bit, and worked a lot, too. I never imagined that I'd end up on the path of an antichrist. Fear gripped my heart. I felt even more nauseated and disgusted by myself. In tears, I prayed, "Oh God! I've been chasing status and protecting my relationships to win others' support. This disposition of mine is so disgusting to You, and if I'm punished, that will be Your righteousness. God, I'm willing to repent."

A little while later, Li Yue was still muddling through her duty, not accomplishing anything, and she still hadn't changed after fellowship. We

told our leader about her issues. A few days later, the leader attended our gathering and fellowshiped on Li Yue's issues to help her. But Li Yue still didn't know herself at all. The leader asked me and Chen Lin to state our positions: Considering the situation, should Li Yue be dismissed? This question took me a bit by surprise. I was thinking that Li Yue was sitting right there, how could I say anything? If I spoke the truth and she was dismissed, then she might hate me. I felt like I shouldn't speak up. At that moment, I felt a strong pang of guilt. I realized that once again I was thinking of protecting my place in others' hearts. I said a silent prayer to God in my heart, "God, I'm thinking about living by satanic philosophies, protecting my image, acting like a people pleaser again. Please guide me to speak the truth and rebel against my incorrect motives." I remembered a passage of God's words after praying. God says: **"If your heart is increasingly honest, and increasingly oriented toward God, and if you know to protect the interests of God's house when you perform your duty, and your conscience is troubled when you fail to protect these interests, then this is proof that the truth has had an effect in you, and has become your life. Once the truth has become life in you, when you observe someone who is blasphemous toward God, unfearful of God, and perfunctory while performing their duty, or who disrupts and disturbs church work, you will respond according to the truth principles, and will be able to identify and expose them as necessary"**

(The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. Part Three). God's words showed me that when things crop up, we have to stand on the side of God and uphold church work. When we see others violating principles, disrupting church work, we can't shield them, but should follow the truth principles. This is the true human likeness that God asks us to live out. Based on Li Yue's behavior, she wasn't suited to continue doing that work

at that time. I couldn't fear offending her, but I had to uphold church work, be an honest person and clarify my position. And so, I explained my perspective. After weighing everything, the leader dismissed Li Yue.

After that, I was paired up to do a duty with Sister Wang Jia. In our interactions, I noticed that sometimes she delayed church work for personal matters. I fellowshiped with her that work had to come first. Before long, I heard our leader say that she was going to promote Wang Jia to manage an item of work. My thought was that Wang Jia had caliber and was capable, so she'd be okay being in charge of work. But when her personal matters conflicted with work, sometimes she didn't prioritize her duty. If she didn't become aware of that problem, would work be delayed with her in charge? As her partner, I had a responsibility to go fellowship and point it out to her. But I hesitated when it got to the tip of my tongue. I had already fellowshiped with her on that kind of issue. If I brought it up again, would she say I wouldn't let go of the issue, but was exposing her flaws nonstop? I realized I was in the wrong state again, so I silently prayed. I thought of a passage of God's words I'd read before that said: **"God demands that people tell the truth, say what they think, and not trick, mislead, make fun of, satirize, deride, mock, or constrict others, or expose their weaknesses, or hurt them. Are these not the principles of speech? What does it mean to say one should not expose people's weaknesses? It means not to get dirt on other people. Do not hold on to their past mistakes or shortcomings in order to judge or condemn them. This is the least you should do. On the proactive side, how is constructive speech expressed? It is mainly encouraging, orienting, guiding, exhorting, understanding, and comforting. Also, in some special instances, it becomes necessary to directly expose other people's errors and prune them, so that they gain knowledge of the truth and desire to**

repent. Only then is the due effect achieved. This way of practicing is of great benefit to people. It is a real help to them, and it is constructive for them, is it not? ... And what, in sum, is the principle behind speaking? It is this: Say what's in your heart, and speak of your true experiences and what you really think. These words are the most beneficial to people, they provide for people, they help them, they are positive. Refuse to say those fake words, those words that do not benefit or edify people; this will avoid harming them or tripping them up, plunging them into negativity, and having a negative effect. You must say positive things. You must strive to help people as much as you can, to benefit them, to provide to them, to produce in them true faith in God; and you must allow people to be helped, and to gain much, from your experiences of God's words and the way you solve problems, and to be able to understand the path of experiencing the work of God and entering the truth reality, allowing them to have life entry and making their life grow—which is all the effect of your words having principles, and being edifying to people” (The Word, Vol. 6. On the Pursuit of the Truth I. What It Means to Pursue the Truth (3)). I found a path of practice from God's words. In my interactions, I have to tell the truth so people can benefit and be edified. I can't taunt them, be sarcastic, or mock them. I also understood that when God says not to expose people's weaknesses, it's about not holding on to their mistakes or shortcomings, and judging and condemning them. Pointing out and exposing their issues so they can learn a lesson isn't exposing weaknesses, but is loving help. Wang Jia didn't know herself, and pointing out her issue was reminding and helping her. Even if she didn't accept it right away and thought poorly of me, I should handle it appropriately. As long as she was a pursuer of the truth, she would later seek the truth, know herself, and change. Understanding this, I

fellowshipped with Wang Jia on her problem. Later on, Wang Jia said in an essay she wrote, “If the sister I was partnered with hadn’t exposed and dissected my issue, I wouldn’t have self-reflected or seen the seriousness of my problem, much less repented and changed.” Seeing that Wang Jia had gained that understanding, I thanked God in my heart. It was God’s words that helped me see the true face of my nice-guy act and change my mistaken perspective on pursuit. Thank God for His salvation!

20. I've Heard the Voice of God

By Matthew, France

I accepted Almighty God's work of the last days over two years ago. To be honest, I've gained more than I did in the ten years or so I spent as a believer within the religious community.

My name is Matthew, and I was born into a family of Catholics in Lyon, France. I had a traditional Catholic upbringing of being baptized, attending Mass, receiving the laying on of hands, and going on the pilgrimage. After growing up, I realized that the Catholic priests always preached the same old doctrines without any new content. It was a cold atmosphere and lots of believers' faith had dampened. I felt that this place was devoid of the work of the Holy Spirit, and that I could not gain life there. This was discouraging for me. I longed to find a church with the work of the Holy Spirit where I could feel the Lord's presence. I decided to leave Catholicism to find this kind of church. I ended up in Geneva after that, where I went to university and joined a local Christian evangelical church. But I found that the pastor just preached some biblical words and doctrines, shouted some slogans, and talked about spiritual gifts and theological theories that were divorced from reality. There wasn't anything that moved me or helped me get to know the Lord. Another thing I noticed that shocked me even more was the idol worshiping. The head pastor's portrait was up next to the pulpit and whenever a newcomer joined the church, the local pastor would have them salute the portrait of the head pastor. The pastor would send believers his own Scripture interpretations every single day and the brothers and sisters would treat them like their daily bread, as if they were reading God's words. They even practiced them as if they were God's own words. This made me really uncomfortable. It

didn't seem right to me. I could see that the Lord wasn't in that church, and so I left that church as well. I asked myself, "Where is the Lord, really?" I felt really spiritually empty and I wondered if the Lord had cast me aside. From then on, I read the Bible on my own at home. I read the third chapter of Revelation a lot, and the part that talks about the church in Philadelphia left a particularly deep impression on me. **"Because you have kept the word of My patience, I also will keep you from the hour of temptation, which shall come on all the world, to try them that dwell on the earth. Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which you have, that no man take your crown. Him that overcomes will I make a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go no more out"** (Revelation 3:10–12). These verses really made me happy because they were brimming with mystery and promises. I saw that the Lord clearly says that there will be one church that the Lord approves of, which is the church in Philadelphia. I felt like the Lord was saying, "I'm in this church." That brought up a question for me: Where is this church? Reading on, I saw this: **"Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hears My voice, and opens the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me"** (Revelation 3:20). I was so excited to read that the Lord clearly stated He would knock at the door. I wondered how exactly He'd knock and if that meant He would return soon. That was incredibly enlightening for me, and drove my desire to keep seeking.

On the evening of May 1, 2018, I prayed to God with all my heart and soul again, "Oh God, please enlighten me. I know You're coming soon. Please let me understand Your intention." The next day, I went to work like always. I went to the banks of Lake Geneva for my lunch break and sat on a bench. Then I noticed someone in the distance, so I walked right up to him with the intention of sharing the gospel with him. To my surprise, he said to

me, “Brother, do you know? The Lord has returned and has expressed millions of words.” I was shocked when I heard this and wondered, “Why would this brother say that? Has the Lord really returned?” As we continued our fellowship, questions sprung up one after another in my mind, “Has the Lord returned? How has the Lord returned?” He gave me the address for The Church of Almighty God’s website and said, “You can look into it more here.”

I opened up the website of The Church of Almighty God as soon as I was back in the office. The very first thing I saw was “Christ of the Last Days Has Appeared in China.” This news shocked me, and what was even more surprising was that there were all sorts of books on the website, including two that really made an impression on me: **The Word Appears in the Flesh** and **Utterances of Christ of the Last Days**. I really wanted to understand what this was, so I clicked on the first book **The Word Appears in the Flesh** and read a passage: “**All of My people who serve before Me should think back on the past: Was your love for Me tainted by impurity? Was your loyalty to Me pure and wholehearted? Was your knowledge of Me true? How much of a place did I hold within your hearts? Did I fill your hearts entirely? How much did My words accomplish within you? Do not try to fool Me! These things are perfectly clear to Me! Today, as the voice of My salvation is uttered forth, has there been some increase in your love for Me? Has part of your loyalty to Me become pure? Has your knowledge of Me deepened? Did praise offered in the past lay a solid foundation for your knowledge today? How much of you is occupied by My Spirit? How much of a place does My image hold within you? Have My utterances hit home within you? Do you truly feel that you have nowhere to hide your shame? Do you truly believe that you are unqualified to be My people?**

If you are completely oblivious to the questions above, then this shows that you are fishing in murky waters, that you are only present to make up the numbers, and at the time preordained by Me, you will surely be eliminated and knocked into the bottomless pit for a second time. These are My words of warning, and any who take them lightly will be struck by My judgment, and, at the appointed time, will meet with disaster. Is this not so?" (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. God's Words to the Entire Universe, Chapter 4). These words felt so authoritative to me, as if God Himself were speaking to me face-to-face, asking me, "Do you have true love for Me? Is your submission to Me genuine?" I felt a little uneasy because I served God just to complete a task, not because of love. In my prayers, I was constantly demanding things from the Lord, saying, "Oh God, I want this kind of car, I want this kind of house, I want that kind of job, I want this kind of wife...." I realized that this was all unreasonable. Even worse, if the Lord didn't satisfy my extravagant desires, I'd blame Him. I was utterly ashamed in the face of this exposure, to the point of wanting to find a place to hide, like a child hiding from being scolded by his parents for bad behavior. But I was also really happy, because I felt like God was speaking to me face-to-face. I felt this was God's voice, because only God can see into human hearts. These words were exposing me for what I really was, leaving me speechless. I couldn't help but keep reading. I read quite a few passages of God's words. I remember one passage among them that really left an impression on me. Almighty God says: **"I look down upon all things from on high, and exercise dominion over all things from on high. In the same way, I have put in place My salvation upon the earth. There is never a moment when I am not watching, from My secret place, humans' every move and everything they say and do. Humans are to Me open books: I see and know them one and all. The secret**

place is My abode, and the entire vault of heaven is the bed on which I lie. Satan's forces cannot reach Me, for I am overflowing with majesty, righteousness, and judgment" (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. God's Words to the Entire Universe, Chapter 5). I felt like these words were full of the authority of God. Who aside from God can see into our hearts? Who aside from God can directly speak to us with such power and authority? God created mankind and only God can see the things we bury deep within our hearts. I felt certain that these were words from God and I felt so excited. It was a feeling I'd never had before. I read a lot that day and went back home three hours later than usual. I felt that these words were truly special. On the way home, I was saying over and over, "God, I truly thank You! I've recognized Your voice and I know You've returned. I've witnessed Your authority. May all glory be to You!" I was so excited. I thought back on my prayer to God from the night before, asking Him to help me understand His intention regarding His return. I realized God had heard and answered my prayer. It was something so truly incredible! But at the same time, I was also filled with questions, like: How has the Lord come? What work is He doing? To get these questions answered, I got in touch with the brothers and sisters from The Church of Almighty God.

They then told me that the Lord has become flesh as the Son of man, and that He's come in secret. They told me that He's expressed truths and is doing new work, namely, the judgment of the last days beginning with the house of God prophesied in the Bible, to fully cleanse and save mankind. They also shared fellowship with me that was really enlightening on some Bible verses like Revelation 16:15, "**Behold, I come as a thief.**" There was also Matthew 24:44, "**Be you also ready: for in such an hour as you think not the Son of man comes.**" The "Son of man" clearly doesn't refer to God's Spirit or His spiritual body, but to a being born of man that

possesses normal humanity and the essence of God. That's just like the Lord Jesus two thousand years ago. He looked like a regular person, but He was God in essence. After that, they also fellowshiped on Revelation 3:20, which mentions the Lord knocking at the door. I learned that "knocking" refers to the Lord expressing new words in the last days to knock on the doors of people's hearts. When true believers hear the Lord's words, they are able to recognize them as the voice of God, and they are the wise virgins who are taken up before God and who welcome the Lord's return. This also fulfills the Lord Jesus' prophecy: **"My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me"** (John 10:27).

I was struck. I thought about how this is the second time God's come to work on earth in the flesh and it's just when I'm alive in the world, breathing the same air, and He looks just like any regular person. I was amazed, this was incredible! Because I'd always thought God should be up in the sky, and I'd never imagined that in the last days, God would come to earth in the flesh to speak and work. Then the brothers and sisters read a couple of passages of God's words to me on God's incarnation: **"The 'incarnation' is God's appearance in the flesh; God works among created mankind in the image of the flesh. So for God to be incarnated, He must first be flesh, flesh with normal humanity; this is the most basic prerequisite. In fact, the implication of God's incarnation is that God lives and works in the flesh, that God in His very essence becomes flesh, becomes a man"** (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. The Essence of the Flesh Inhabited by God). **"The incarnate God is called Christ, and Christ is the flesh donned by the Spirit of God. This flesh is unlike any man that is of the flesh. This difference is because Christ is the incarnation of the Spirit, rather than being fleshly. He has both a normal humanity and a complete divinity. His divinity is not possessed by any man. His**

normal humanity sustains all His normal activities in the flesh, while His divinity carries out the work of God Himself. Be it His humanity or divinity, both submit to the will of the heavenly Father. The essence of Christ is the Spirit, that is, the divinity. Therefore, His essence is that of God Himself; this essence will not disrupt His own work, and He could not possibly do anything that destroys His own work, nor would He ever utter any words that go against His own will” (The Word, Vol. 1. The

Appearance and Work of God. The Essence of Christ Is Submission to the Will of the Heavenly Father). From these passages of God’s words, I saw that God incarnate is God’s Spirit taking on the flesh and coming to earth to speak and work in order to save mankind. Christ looks like a regular person on the surface, eating, dressing, living and sleeping like anyone, but He has divine essence. He can speak to all of humanity in the identity and position of God and He can express truths that no human ever could. He can do the work of God Himself and accomplish the will of God. On the outside we can’t tell that He’s God, but when we hear His voice, we find that His words are not of this world. He can elucidate truths and mysteries no one has ever seen or heard. He can reveal mankind’s innermost corruption. What He expresses is what God Himself expresses. That’s why we believe that He is God. Just like when the Lord Jesus came to work back then, He looked like a normal person from the outside, but He was capable of being the sin offering for all of mankind to absolve our sins. He could give us peace and joy, and an abundance of grace. No one other than Him could do this kind of work because people are just people, and don’t possess God’s essence.

The brothers and sisters also fellowshiped that Almighty God is just like the Lord Jesus. He looks like a regular person on the outside, but His essence is of God. He is doing the work of judgment beginning with God’s house, expressing all truths that cleanse and save mankind, and unlocking

mysteries no human could ever unlock. Especially things like the mysteries of God's six-thousand-year management plan, the mysteries of God's three stages of work, how Satan corrupts people, how God saves mankind step-by-step, who is going to be saved and enter the kingdom of heaven, who will be eliminated and punished, and also His exposure of people's satanic nature—no one but God could express these truths. No human could do that. This proves that Almighty God has divine essence, and that He's Christ of the last days. Hearing all this helped me understand some truths of the incarnation, and I saw that Christ has both normal humanity and divine essence. Some of my vague imaginings and notions about God were cleared up. God incarnate can be seen and touched, and He can speak with people face-to-face. Thinking of God becoming flesh in the last days and personally coming to earth to express words to save all of humanity was really exciting and touching for me. But when I heard that God has incarnated a second time to do the work of judgment, I felt a little apprehensive, and a little scared. Because I was still living in sin, I wondered if I would be condemned and punished when the Lord returned to judge mankind. However, after fellowshiping with the brothers and sisters, I learned that God's work of judgment isn't to condemn and punish us, but to cleanse and save us. In fact, the Lord Jesus only did one part of the work of salvation. He just absolved our sins. But our sinful natures still exist. Although we may expend ourselves for God and ostensibly do some good things, our nature is full of satanic dispositions like arrogance, deceitfulness, and intransigence. We're often jealous of others and everything we do is for ourselves. We're incredibly selfish. We're entirely controlled and bound by our satanic dispositions, and we have no idea how to escape the bonds of sin. This is a fact that we can see every single day. God said: **"You shall therefore be holy, for I am holy"** (Leviticus 11:45). This

verse clearly shows that we're not worthy of entering the kingdom of heaven. That's why God does the work of judgment to cleanse and save us in the last days, so we can be fully freed from the bonds of sin and become people who fear and submit to God, who no longer sin and resist God. That's the goal of God's work of judgment, fulfilling the Lord Jesus' prophecies: **"Sanctify them through Your truth: Your word is truth"** (John 17:17). **"You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free"** (John 8:32).

We then read another couple of passages. God's words say: **"Though Jesus came among man and did much work, He only completed the work of redeeming all mankind and served as man's sin offering; He did not rid man of all his corrupt disposition. Fully saving man from the influence of Satan not only required Jesus to become the sin offering and bear the sins of man, but it also required God to do even greater work to rid man completely of his satanically corrupted disposition. And so, after man was forgiven of his sins, God returned to the flesh to lead man into the new age, and began the work of chastisement and judgment. This work has brought man into a higher realm. All those who submit under His dominion shall enjoy higher truth and receive greater blessings. They shall truly live in the light, and they shall gain the truth, the way, and the life"** (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. Preface). **"Christ of the last days uses a variety of truths to teach man, to expose the substance of man, and to dissect the words and deeds of man. These words comprise various truths, such as man's duty, how man should submit to God, how man should be loyal to God, how man ought to live out normal humanity, as well as the wisdom and the disposition of God, and so on. These words are all directed at the substance of man and his corrupt disposition. In**

particular, the words that expose how man spurns God are spoken in regard to how man is an embodiment of Satan, and an enemy force against God. In undertaking His work of judgment, God does not simply make clear the nature of man with a few words; He exposes and prunes over the long term. All these different methods of exposure and pruning cannot be substituted with ordinary words, but with the truth of which man is utterly bereft. Only methods such as these can be called judgment; only through judgment of this kind can man be subdued and thoroughly convinced about God, and moreover gain true knowledge of God. What the work of judgment brings about is man's understanding of the true face of God and the truth about his own rebelliousness. The work of judgment allows man to gain much understanding of the intentions of God, of the purpose of God's work, and of the mysteries that are incomprehensible to him. It also allows man to recognize and know his corrupt essence and the roots of his corruption, as well as to discover the ugliness of man. These effects are all brought about by the work of judgment, for the essence of this work is actually the work of opening up the truth, the way, and the life of God to all those who have faith in Him. This work is the work of **judgment done by God**" (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. Christ Does the Work of Judgment With the Truth). Then a brother fellowshiped, "In the last days, Almighty God expresses truths to judge and cleanse mankind. God's words expose and judge our satanic nature, as well as the truth of our corruption, and He resolves our corrupt dispositions and sinful natures through trials and refinement so we clearly see how deeply Satan has corrupted mankind, and see the arrogance, crookedness, and deceitfulness in our nature. What's most saddening is that though we may believe in God and expend ourselves for Him, and ostensibly do some good things, these

things are not done out of love for or submission to God, they are done to be blessed and rewarded, and are only done to make transactions with God. The moment God's work doesn't accord with our thoughts and notions, we deny and reject God, just like the Pharisees did. We blame God in the face of trials and adversity. All this shows that we're still living with corrupt satanic dispositions, and that we still belong to Satan. How could that kind of person get into the kingdom of heaven? It is the judgment and exposure in God's words that make us see the truth of our corruption, that we're incapable of following God's will, and that none of our deeds or actions satisfies Him. We're then filled with remorse, repent to God, and become willing to conduct ourselves and do things in accordance with God's words. By undergoing God's judgment and chastisement, we see that God's disposition isn't only made up of love and mercy, but there's also righteousness, majesty, wrath, and damnation. We start to have a bit of a God-fearing heart and become able to consciously rebel against the flesh and practice God's words. We develop some submission to God and our life disposition starts to change. Then we truly experience that God's judgment, chastisement, trials, and refinement are His greatest salvation and greatest love for us."

Hearing this from the brother, I could sense how profoundly meaningful God's work of judgment in the last days is. Without experiencing God's judgment of the last days, we can never understand the truth of our corruption or gain true repentance. Just like me, I was praying and confessing to the Lord every day, then I'd still commit the same sins again. I was entirely controlled by my corrupt nature, and in a state like that, how could I possibly get into the kingdom of heaven and gain God's approval? Before, I always thought that as long as I appeared to behave well, God would approve of me. But I realized now that God wants the

satanic things within us to change. That was when I realized how important the work of judgment is for us, that without this stage of work, no one could be saved. God expresses the truth and does the work of judgment in the last days to cleanse our corrupt dispositions so we can be compatible with God and get into His kingdom. God's love is so genuine and so real!

By reading Almighty God's words, I became entirely certain that Almighty God is the Lord Jesus returned. He is Christ of the last days. There is no shadow of a doubt. From then on, I participated in church life, fellowshiped with the brothers and sisters every day, and learned to know God. I didn't believe in the vague God of my imagination like I used to, but in the practical God in the flesh, who walks and works among mankind, who can express the truth at any time and any place. I've heard the voice of God, enjoyed the abundant watering and sustenance of His words, and tasted the work of the Holy Spirit. I have truly come to the Lord's side. Thank Almighty God for His salvation!

21. A Mistaken Report

By Jeffrey, Australia

For more than a year, God has fellowshiped on the truths of discerning false leaders. At meetings, I often fellowshiped on my own understanding and knowledge about it, but in real life, I couldn't discern false leaders. When I saw the slightest manifestation of a leader not doing real work, I blindly labeled and condemned them as a false leader. As a result, not only did I fail to protect the church's work, I nearly caused a disruption to the work. This failure taught me a lesson which gave me some discernment of false leaders.

I handled general affairs in the church. I was responsible for managing certain items and tools at the church. In the course of my duty, I found that brothers and sisters treated the items inappropriately. This made management difficult. I went to the leader, Sister Megan, and reported these issues to her. I also reminded her that she could raise these issues with the others and fellowship about them at meetings. Once she understood, she agreed to do it. After that, I waited for Megan to come to a meeting, but despite waiting for a long time, I never saw her at any meeting and she never followed up on it, so I became fixated on the leader. I thought, "It's been a long time. Why hasn't she followed up on this task? I've told her about this problem more than once, but it has never been resolved. God has been fellowshiping on aspects of the truth which pertain to discerning false leaders. If you don't follow up on and resolve problems, you are a false leader. I have to report this issue to your superiors. That way, the leaders above you will feel that I have a sense of justice. They might even think highly of me!" But at the time, I just thought about it and did not act. Later, the rental contract for the place where we stored our books of God's words

was going to expire in just over a month, so the books needed to be moved to another place as soon as possible. Because there were so many books and each box was heavy, it would be hard for me to move them by myself, and it would take a long time. I was a little anxious, so I asked the leader if she could find a few people to help. The leader always said she was looking for people, but for the longest time, no one came. Finally, two brothers came and helped me with one trip, but then left in a hurry. This situation made me very frustrated. I thought, “Why couldn’t the leader find more people to help? Why doesn’t she follow up on this work? Why doesn’t she come here and see how much work I have to do?” The more I thought, the angrier I got, and I didn’t want to report problems to the leader anymore because it seemed pointless. During that time, I didn’t want to see the leader, and I didn’t want to talk to her when I did see her. I thought, “If you don’t want to look for anyone, fine. I’ll finish it by myself. At any rate, I will remember this behavior of yours, and when the time comes, I’ll report it to your superiors.” I then thought of a passage of God’s words about discerning false leaders: **“Regarding the problems and difficulties that arise in church work, it is also the case that false leaders simply pay them no mind or just spout a little doctrine and parrot a few slogans to brush them off. For all items of work, one will never see them coming to the workplace themselves to try to understand and follow up on the work. One will not see them fellowshiping on the truth to resolve problems there, and less still will one see them there directing and supervising the work personally, preventing flaws and deviations from occurring in it. This is the most obvious manifestation of the perfunctory way in which false leaders work”** (The Word, Vol. 5. The Responsibilities of Leaders and Workers. The Responsibilities of Leaders and Workers (4)). I thought, “My leader’s behavior is the same as God’s words describe. If she won’t investigate or resolve the

problems in my work, isn't she a false leader?" But I also thought about how I didn't communicate with the leader about the problems I saw, nor did I ask several people who understood the truth to verify it, so perhaps I couldn't call her a false leader so rashly. I thought, "How about I seek more of the truth principles in this area first, then discuss it with several brothers and sisters who understand the truth before I make a decision?" But her behavior was just like God's words described, so what more was there to seek? I wasn't sure if my view was right and I didn't want to wrongly accuse her, so I was conflicted on what to do. My mind was filled with images of how the leader hadn't resolved my problem. So just like that, I didn't seek the truth anymore, didn't consider the background of God's fellowship, and inaccurately understood God's words. I used a single phrase, a single instance of behavior, as proof to accuse Megan and believe she was a false leader. Afterward, I heard some other sisters who handled general affairs say that Megan did not follow up on their work very often either, and that their work was sometimes delayed. When I heard this, I felt even more certain, "Megan does no real work and doesn't follow up on work, so doesn't that reveal her as a false leader? Recently at meetings, we have fellowshipped on aspects of the truth pertaining to discerning false leaders. I can't believe I met one. I need to have a sense of justice, uphold the church's work, and expose this false leader." But when I wanted to report these problems to Megan's superiors, I felt uneasy. I still hadn't discussed the issue with her, nor had I sought or discussed it with those who understood the truth, so wasn't this too blind and arbitrary? But this was when I heard that Megan's superiors had come to talk with her, and had asked all the team leaders about her performance of her duty. When I heard this, I couldn't keep calm, "Who knew Megan's superiors had already found out there was a problem with her? Now it is almost certain that she is

a false leader.” I thought, “I have to report Megan’s problems to her superiors right away. I don’t need to do any more seeking. Otherwise, after Megan’s superiors finish their investigation and dismiss her, when they bring up who had discernment of her, who discovered her problems, and who had a sense of justice and reported her, my name will not be mentioned. Then how can I show I had discernment? I can’t wait anymore!” I eagerly made an appointment with Megan’s superior, Brother Sean, and reported her problems to him. I said, “As a leader, Megan doesn’t follow up on my work, nor does she inquire about my problems at work. Every time I tell her about a problem, she doesn’t solve it.” I also showed him a passage of God’s words about discerning false leaders. I said the behavior of false leaders revealed in God’s words was the same as hers, and that I thought she was a false leader. When I finished, he said, “We’ve already looked into it, and Megan does have some problems. There is some work she hasn’t properly followed up, and she muddles through her duty. She needs to be pruned, and helped to reflect on herself and learn from this. But we also found out that for the past few months, Megan has mostly been overseeing watering work because there are many newcomers who have joined the church recently. Some religious pastors have been causing serious disturbances, and these newcomers urgently need watering so that they put down roots in the true way. This is the most important and critical work right now. Megan has been putting all of her energy into this work. General affairs aren’t quite as urgent. As long as it doesn’t hinder things, it’s not a big problem if she’s a little slow following up for now. Because all this work has come at the same time and we are short on staff, she has to prioritize, so general affairs have to be put on the back burner at the moment. This is the reason Megan hasn’t been following up on your work in time, but she only decided to practice like this after discussing it with her

partners. Besides, Megan used to just be in charge of a single job before. She is a new leader, so it's hard for her to be responsible for so many jobs. There are some things she can't follow up on, so she needs our help and communication." Sean even shared the principles regarding this. Only after reading the principles did I realize that more important work has to be prioritized first. At the moment, watering work was the priority. They could do other work only as long as watering work wasn't affected. If the watering work was affected, wouldn't that be sacrificing the important for the unimportant? Although Megan didn't follow up on some work properly, it was because she was prioritizing more important work, not failing to do real work. But I never tried to understand why she didn't follow up on work, or why she didn't resolve the problems I raised. Instead, I developed a prejudice against her, became fixated on her, thought she didn't do real work, and immediately labeled her as a false leader. Wasn't I being too arbitrary? At this point, Sean asked me, "If we dismissed Megan right now, could the church find someone to replace her right away? Could the work continue?" I thought about it and felt that it was still suitable for Megan to continue as a leader. After talking with Sean, I felt very sad. Originally, I thought I had a strong sense of justice, and even found words of God which applied to the situation, and reported Megan only after seeking the truth. But it turned out that I didn't understand the truth, and my discernment was in error. Where had I gone wrong?

As I sought, I read a passage of God's words: **"The characterization of someone as a false leader or false worker must be based on sufficient facts. It must not be based on one or two incidents or transgressions, much less can temporary revelation of corruption be used as a basis for it. The only accurate standards by which to characterize someone are whether they can do real work and use the truth to resolve problems, as**

well as whether they are a right person, whether they are someone who loves the truth and can submit to God, and whether they possess the work and enlightenment of the Holy Spirit. Someone can only be correctly characterized as a false leader or false worker based on these factors. These factors are the standards and principles for evaluating and determining whether someone is a false leader or false worker” (The

Word, Vol. 5. The Responsibilities of Leaders and Workers. The Responsibilities of Leaders and Workers (20)). From God’s words, I understood that to discern a false leader, we mainly need to look at whether they can do real work and whether they accept the truth. It wasn’t at all like I imagined, that leaders are required to resolve every single problem in my duty, and if they do, they are true leaders, but if they don’t, they are false leaders who don’t do real work. This view is false and not in line with the truth. To determine whether a leader is a false leader, what matters most is whether they can promptly follow up, understand, and grasp the progress and status of each task within the scope of their responsibility; whether they can promptly discover and inquire about the problems, difficulties and deviations brothers and sisters encounter in their duties; and whether they work with them to seek the truth principles to resolve these issues. Based on this, we can judge whether a leader is doing real work. Also, it depends on whether they can accept the truth and are the right person. If leaders have questions they don’t understand, they can seek upwards. When others make suggestions or point out shortcomings, leaders should be able to obey, seek the truth, and reflect on themselves. When they experience pruning, setbacks, and failure, they should be able to learn from it and change afterward. This means they are people who accept the truth. Also, when a leader is responsible for multiple tasks, they don’t need to do it all by themselves. Their main role is to check up on each task, so the work of the church proceeds normally. Someone

who does this is a qualified leader. False leaders always outwardly appear to be busy, but only do superficial or unimportant work. They never do the most important work on time; they blindly run around and busy themselves, but are inefficient. Because they don't understand the truth principles, they can't recognize or see the problems in their work clearly, and they don't know how to plan or arrange things. They are only able to spout doctrines and empty words which do not offer paths of practice or resolve real problems brothers and sisters encounter in their duties. In addition, false leaders don't seek the truth when they encounter things, don't accept the guidance and help of others, and ultimately hinder many tasks from proceeding smoothly, and even cause them to stagnate. This is a serious dereliction of duty; this is what a false leader is. I understood from God's word that discerning whether someone is a false leader requires one to look at multiple aspects and make a thorough investigation. If we only look at a person's temporary behavior and corruption, disregard the background and reasons, whether they have repented and changed, and arbitrarily characterize them, it is all too easy to incorrectly accuse people. Everyone has corruption and shortcomings, but as long as they can know themselves, repent, and make changes, the church will give them an opportunity to continue practicing. After applying the truth principles to Megan's behavior, I saw that she had been following up on the most important tasks, and when she had a problem, she discussed it with others and found a solution. Overall, she was doing real work and producing results in her duty. It was just that all this work had come at the same time, so she hadn't found a balance yet, and some things had fallen through the cracks. This was a shortcoming in her duty, and she needed reminders and help. Once I realized these things, I finally saw that I hadn't understood the truth principles and couldn't treat people fairly. I saw my leader had problems,

but didn't communicate with her about them; I failed to consider all aspects, and blindly characterized her as a false leader. I had no fear of God in my heart at all.

After this, I saw a passage of God's words: **"When someone is elected to be a leader by the brothers and sisters, or is promoted by the house of God to do a certain piece of work or perform a certain duty, this does not mean that they have a special status or position, or that the truths they understand are deeper and more numerous than those of other people—much less that this person is able to submit to God, and will not betray Him. Certainly, it does not mean, either, that they know God, and are someone who fears God. They have attained none of this, in fact. The promotion and cultivation is merely promotion and cultivation in the straightforward sense, and is not equivalent to them having been predestined and approved of by God. Their promotion and cultivation simply means they have been promoted, and await cultivation. And the ultimate outcome of this cultivation depends on whether this person pursues the truth, and on whether they are capable of choosing the path of pursuing the truth. Thus, when someone in the church is promoted and cultivated to be a leader, they are merely promoted and cultivated in the straightforward sense; it does not mean that they are already an up-to-standard leader, or a competent one, that they are already capable of undertaking the work of a leader, and can do real work—that is not the case. Most people cannot see through to these things, and based on their own imaginings they look up to those who have been promoted. This is a mistake. No matter how many years they have believed in God for, do those who are promoted really possess the truth reality? Not necessarily. Are they able to implement the work arrangements of the house of God? Not necessarily. Do they**

have a sense of responsibility? Are they loyal? Are they able to submit? When they encounter an issue, are they able to seek the truth? All of this is unknown. Do these people have God-fearing hearts? And just how great are their God-fearing hearts? Are they able to avoid following their own will when they do things? Are they able to seek God? During the time that they perform the work of leaders, are they able to frequently come before God to seek the intentions of God? Are they able to lead people into the truth reality? They are certainly incapable of such things. They haven't received training and they haven't had enough experiences, so they are incapable of these things. This is why promoting and cultivating someone doesn't mean they already understand the truth, nor is it saying that they are already capable of doing their duty in a way that is up to standard. So what is the aim and significance of promoting and cultivating someone? It is that this person is promoted, as an individual, in order for them to practice, and in order for them to be specially watered and trained, thus enabling them to understand the truth principles, and the principles, means, and methods of doing different things and solving various problems, as well as how to handle and deal with the various types of environments and people they encounter in accordance with God's intentions, and in a way that protects the interests of the house of God. Judging based on these points, are the talented people promoted and cultivated by the house of God adequately capable of undertaking their work and doing their duty well during the promotion and cultivation period or prior to promotion and cultivation? Of course not. Thus, it is unavoidable that, during the cultivation period, these people will experience pruning, judgment and chastisement, exposure and even dismissal; this is normal, this is training and cultivation" (The Word,

Vol. 5. The Responsibilities of Leaders and Workers. The Responsibilities of Leaders and Workers (5)). From God's words, I understood that if someone is chosen as a leader or worker, it doesn't mean they understand the truth and will be completely competent at doing their work. It also doesn't mean they understand everything and can do every task perfectly. They only have some caliber and work ability, and can accept and pursue the truth, so the church gives them a chance to be cultivated and trained. By constantly discovering and solving problems in their work, they will ultimately understand some truth and learn to act with principle. But during this period, leaders and workers are still in the practice stage, so deviations, deficiencies, and shortcomings in their work are inevitable, and we should treat the matter correctly. When we have problems or difficulties, we should seek, fellowship, and solve things alongside our leaders. Only in this way can the work be effective. If we demand too much of leaders and workers, if we push all of the problems we find onto them to resolve, then label them as false leaders when they are slow to find solutions, it is unprincipled and not in line with God's intentions. By reading God's words, I saw that my treatment of leaders and workers wasn't based on truth principles, but rather my own notions and imagination. My requirements for leaders were too high and demanding. When I saw my leader didn't follow up on my work properly and didn't resolve my problems and difficulties quickly, I labeled her as a false leader. I didn't consider the background of the issue or her work as a whole, nor whether she could accept the truth and turn things around. I blindly condemned her as a false leader based on the incomplete information that I saw. This wasn't a sense of justice, it was a disturbance, and it violated the truth principles. I didn't understand the truth and was unprincipled in my treatment of leaders and workers. More seriously, I had no fear of God in my heart. When I saw the slightest problem with my leader, I made a big

deal out of it, carelessly condemned her, and wouldn't let it go. I didn't treat her based on her nature essence or the actual background of the situation, instead I had hurt her. At this thought, I was suddenly gripped by fear. I realized that the nature of this problem was serious. If Sean hadn't known the situation, and had just listened to me and dismissed Megan, the church's work would have been affected, so wouldn't I have been doing evil? That would have been a major transgression! If something like this happened to me again, I couldn't rely on my imagination to evaluate others. I had to seek the truth principles more, treat people fairly according to God's requirements, and do things in a principled manner.

Afterward, Megan came to me and talked about her recent state and work problems. She said she wanted to change, and she learned about the problems and difficulties in my work, and we worked together to fellowship with the brothers and sisters on each team. I realized she wasn't someone who didn't accept the truth. Although there were oversights in her work and areas she didn't follow up on, once she knew there was a problem, she could make changes quickly. I saw that she actually wasn't a false leader who didn't do real work.

At first, I thought I had some understanding of this issue—I didn't understand the truth and couldn't discern false leaders, which caused me to make a mistake. But one time at a meeting, I heard my brothers and sisters say that sometimes mistakes aren't simply due to a lack of discernment or lack of understanding of the truth. We also have to look at whether our actions were adulterated by intents or corrupt dispositions. I read a passage of God's words that say: **“Do not regard your transgressions as the mere mistakes of an immature or foolish person; do not use the excuse that you did not practice the truth because your poor caliber had made it impossible to do so. Moreover, do not simply regard the transgressions**

you have committed as the acts of someone who did not know any better. If you are good at forgiving yourself and treating yourself with generosity, then I say you are a coward who will never gain the truth, nor will your transgressions ever cease to haunt you; they will keep you from ever meeting the demands of the truth, and cause you to forever remain a loyal companion of Satan” (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. Transgressions Will Lead Man to Hell). After reading God’s words, I understood that when a situation arises, we can’t just treat it as a simple matter and be done with it. We need to seek the truth and come to know our own corrupt disposition. Only then can there be genuine change and growth in our life. If we always treat our transgressions as fleeting mistakes, feel they don’t matter, say we’ll pay more attention next time, and always forgive our own transgressions, then we will never understand our own problems, never gain the truth, and ultimately, as our transgressions mount and we make no changes at all, God will spurn and eliminate us. Through what God’s words revealed, I began to reflect on precisely what my thoughts were when this situation came upon me, what intents adulterated me, or what corrupt dispositions I displayed. Through reflection, I found that when I saw the leader’s problems, I wasn’t actually sure if I saw things correctly and I wanted to read more of God’s words. But when I heard that Megan didn’t follow up on the work of other people who handled general affairs, and that her superiors were looking into her performance, I believed there was a strong possibility that she was a false leader, and felt I needed to quickly report to Megan’s superiors so that my brothers and sisters would see that I had a sense of justice and was discerning. So, without understanding the truth principles or continuing to seek, and without knowing any background or reasons, I blindly characterized Megan as a false leader based on a piece of information I had heard. I thought I saw things accurately and that there

shouldn't be any problems. But now I realized I had been reckless, and had the wrong intent. I reflected on myself, "Why did I report my leader without understanding the truth principles? What is the source of this problem?" I read this in God's words: **"There are many people who follow their own ideas no matter what they do, and consider things in highly simplistic terms, and do not seek the truth, either. There is a total absence of principle, and in their hearts they give no thought to how to act according to what God asks, or in a way that satisfies God, and they know only to mulishly follow their own will. God has no place in such people's hearts. Some people say, 'I only pray to God when I encounter difficulty, but still it doesn't feel like this has any effect—so generally when things happen to me now I don't pray to God, because praying to God is of no use.' God is utterly absent from the hearts of such people. They do not seek the truth no matter what they are doing at ordinary times; they only follow their own ideas. So are there principles to their actions? Definitely not. They see everything in simple terms. Even when people fellowship the truth principles to them, they are not able to accept them, because there have never been any principles to their actions, God has no place in their hearts, and there is no one but them in their hearts. They feel their intentions are good, that they are not committing evil, that they cannot be considered in violation of the truth, they think that acting according to their own intentions should be practicing the truth, that acting thus is submitting to God. In fact, they are not truly seeking or praying to God in this matter, but acting on impulse, according to their own zealous intentions, they are not performing their duty as God asks, they do not have a heart of submission to God, they are absent of this wish. This is the greatest mistake in people's practice. If you believe in God yet He is not in your**

heart, are you not trying to deceive God? And what effect can such faith in God have? Just what can you gain? And what is the point of such faith in God?" (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. Part Three). Through the exposure of God's words, I saw that when things happened, I rarely sought the truth or practiced in accordance with the principles. Instead, I followed my own ideas. In my heart, there was neither a place for God nor a fear of Him. When something happens, those who fear God first seek the truth principles and what God's words say about the matter, then view people and things based on God's words and the truth. Since I was unable to discern false leaders, I should have sought the truth, clearly understood what false leaders are, their manifestations, and how to determine who is a false leader, but instead I just made arbitrary judgements based on my own imagination. I thought that if a leader did not follow up on my work or solve my problems, that made them a false one. Although I read and pondered God's words during that period of time, I didn't understand them. When I saw a line of God's words about false leaders that literally matched Megan's behavior, I concluded that she was a false leader, and thought I saw the situation very accurately. In actuality, I was taking things out of context and blindly applying rules. And I felt uneasy throughout this process. I wanted to seek more and communicate with Megan before I reported her, but I felt her behavior was already so obvious that I didn't bother to seek any further, and simply acted on my own ideas. I was so arrogant and self-righteous! I also saw that I had bad humanity. I wasn't truly considerate of God's intentions, nor did I safeguard the church's work. When I saw problems in my leader's work, I didn't point them out to her; instead, I looked for an opportunity to report her to her superiors, so that I could show off my discernment. I could see how despicable I was, and it was a heart-wrenching realization. I never imagined

this was the kind of person I was. I clearly didn't understand the truth principles, yet I was so arrogant and unreasonable. I was delighted with myself after reporting my leader because I felt I had seen things that no one else had discerned, and understood the truth principles. But I actually understood nothing; all I understood were words and doctrines, and I blindly applied the rules. I arbitrarily reported someone without principle. Wasn't this disturbing the church's work? I wasn't accruing good deeds, I was doing evil!

Later, I read God's words and learned the principles by which to treat leaders and workers. Almighty God says: **"People must not have any high expectations or unrealistic demands of those who are promoted and cultivated; that would be unreasonable, and unfair to them. You can supervise their work. If you discover problems or things that violate principles in the course of their work, you can raise the issue and seek the truth to resolve these matters. What you should not do is judge, condemn, attack, or exclude them, because they are just in the cultivation period, and should not be viewed as people who have been made perfect, much less as people who are blameless, or as people who are possessed of the truth reality. Like you, they are merely in a period of training. The difference is that they undertake more work and responsibilities than ordinary people. They have a responsibility and an obligation to do more work; they must pay a greater price, suffer more hardship, exert more mental effort, solve more problems, tolerate more censure from people, and of course they must also make a greater effort, and—compared with ordinary people doing their duties—they must have a bit less sleep, enjoy a bit less fine food, and not engage in so much gossip. This is what's special about them; apart from this, they are the same as anyone else. ... So what is the most reasonable way to**

treat them? To regard them as ordinary people and, when you need to seek someone out regarding a problem, to fellowship with them and learn from each other's strengths and complement each other. In addition, it is everyone's responsibility to keep an eye on whether leaders and workers are doing real work, whether they can use the truth to solve problems; these are the standards and principles for measuring whether a leader or worker is up to standard. If a leader or worker is capable of dealing with and solving general problems, then they are competent. But if they can't even handle and fix ordinary problems, they are not fit to be a leader or worker, and must be quickly removed from their position. Someone else must be chosen, and the work of the house of God must not be delayed. Delaying the work of the house of God is hurting oneself and others, it is good for no one" (The

Word, Vol. 5. The Responsibilities of Leaders and Workers. The Responsibilities of Leaders and Workers (5)). After reading God's words, I understood how to treat leaders and workers. The leaders the church elects do not fully understand the truth, are not perfectly qualified, and don't understand every aspect of the work or know how to do it well. They are also in a period of practice, and may display corruption, deviation, or make mistakes. We should treat people fairly and not demand too much from them; we should not be unreasonable by asking them to do everything perfectly without any deviations or oversights. Instead, we must be understanding and tolerant, and cooperate harmoniously with them to do the church's work well. This is what it means to be considerate of God's intentions, and treating leaders and workers in this way is in line with the principles. Also, we have a responsibility to monitor the work of leaders. We should accept and obey when our leaders' actions accord with the truth, but when their actions do not conform to the truth principles, we should raise issues, fellowship on it, and help them in a

timely manner, so that they can realize the deviations in their duties and correct them quickly. This is beneficial to their life entry and to the church's work. If the principles confirm that someone is a false leader who does no real work, then they should be exposed and reported. When I realized this, my heart brightened, and I knew how to treat leaders and workers in the future.

Although this time I had erroneously discerned and reported my leader, I learned some truth principles about discerning false leaders. I also learned how I should treat leaders and workers, gained some knowledge of my own corrupt disposition, and learned some lessons. Thanks be to God!

22. My Experience of Preaching to a Pastor

By Li Zhi, China

One evening in April of 2021, a leader told me, suddenly, that an elderly pastor, over fifty years in the faith, wanted to investigate God's work of the last days—it was Pastor Cao from Caojia Village. I was told to go and share the gospel with him. The leader told me Pastor Cao had preached in many countries, that he had not betrayed the Lord even when imprisoned for his faith by the CCP, and that he truly believed in the Lord. When I heard all this, I recalled many pastors and elders I'd met while spreading the gospel. The majority clung to the literal words of the Bible and to religious notions. They couldn't recognize God's voice and it was hard for them to accept the truth. And they valued their status and income so deeply that they heard the words of Almighty God and acknowledged they were the truth, yet did not accept Almighty God. Would this old pastor really be able to accept the truth? Or would he stubbornly cling to his religious notions like the others? I was also quite nervous—I'd been on another duty for a few years, and hadn't spread the gospel for some time. Now I suddenly had to face this old pastor, full of biblical knowledge and religious notions. If I didn't fellowship clearly on the truth and failed to resolve his religious notions, wouldn't I have failed in my duty? Then I thought of God's words: **“People's faith is required when something cannot be seen by the naked eye, and your faith is required when you cannot let go of your own notions. When you do not have clarity about God's work, what is required of you is to have faith and to take a firm stance and stand strong in your testimony”** (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. Those Who Are to Be Made Perfect Must Undergo Refinement). **“The Holy Spirit works by this principle: Through people's cooperation, through**

them actively praying, searching and coming closer to God, results can be achieved and they can be enlightened and illuminated by the Holy Spirit. It is not the case that the Holy Spirit acts unilaterally, or that man acts unilaterally. Both are indispensable, and the more that people cooperate, and the more they pursue the attainment of the standards of God's requirements, the greater the work of the Holy Spirit" (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. How to Know Reality). It's true. Meeting this potential gospel recipient was God's sovereignty and arrangement. Though I'd failed in sharing the gospel with pastors and elders before, I couldn't just label them all as unable to accept God's work of the last days. I had to have faith in God, and really pay a price by cooperating. God's sheep hear His voice—so long as he yearned for truth, and was willing to investigate the true way, it was my duty to testify God's work of the last days to him. If there was even a glimmer of hope, I couldn't give up. I had to fulfill my duty and responsibility by relying on God and fellowshiping with love and patience—then I'd have no debts or regrets. Having these thoughts finally gave me faith.

After I saw Pastor Cao, I asked for his thoughts on the Lord's return. He told me solemnly, "More than twenty years ago, some people preached the gospel to me several times. They testified that Almighty God is the Lord Jesus returned, expressing the truth and doing the work of judgment in the last days. They said the Bible recorded God's previous words and work—now the Lord Jesus had returned, and He had expressed new words, and that only by reading the new words of Almighty God and truly accepting them could I understand the truth and be saved by God. Hearing that, I couldn't accept it. Paul said very clearly, 'All scripture is given by inspiration of God' (2 Timothy 3:16). This meant the Bible is the word of God, the Christian canon, which could not be denied. Heaven and earth will pass

away; God's words will remain. So believers at all times must read the Bible, and adhere to it. I was convinced they were wrong and didn't want any more of their fellowship." I said to him, "Pastor Cao, I can understand why you thought that. Most people in the religious world concluded all the words in the Bible were God's words based on what Paul said. But does this statement really line up with the facts?" Pastor Cao then replied, "Of course it does." I told him, "On whether the Bible is entirely the word of God, the precise answer was provided long ago by the words of Almighty God. We might as well read His words." He looked a little solemn, and hesitated before nodding and saying, "Since you're here, I'll listen." So, we shared Almighty God's words with him.

Almighty God says: **"Today, people believe the Bible is God, and that God is the Bible. So, too, do they believe that all the words of the Bible were the only words God spoke, and that they were all said by God. Those who believe in God even think that, although all of the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testament were written by people, they were all given by inspiration of God, and a record of the utterances of the Holy Spirit. This is the distorted comprehension of man, and it does not completely accord with the facts. In fact, apart from the books of prophecy, most of the Old Testament is a historical record. Some of the epistles of the New Testament come from people's experiences, and some come from the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit; the Pauline epistles, for example, arose from the work of a man, they were all the result of the Holy Spirit's enlightenment, and they were written for the churches, and were words of exhortation and encouragement for the brothers and sisters of the churches. They were not words spoken by the Holy Spirit—Paul could not speak on behalf of the Holy Spirit, and neither was he a prophet, much less did he see**

the visions that John beheld. His epistles were written for the churches of Ephesus, Corinth, Galatia, and other churches. And thus, the Pauline epistles of the New Testament are epistles that Paul wrote for the churches, and not inspirations from the Holy Spirit, nor are they the direct utterances of the Holy Spirit. They are merely words of exhortation, comfort, and encouragement that he wrote for the churches during the course of his work. So, too, are they a record of much of Paul's work at the time. They were written for all who are brothers and sisters in the Lord, so that the brothers and sisters of the churches at that time would obey his advice and follow the way of repentance of the Lord Jesus" (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. Concerning the Bible (3)). "Not everything in the Bible is a record of the words personally spoken by God. The Bible simply documents the previous two stages of God's work, of which one part is a record of the foretelling of the prophets, and one part is the experiences and knowledge written by people used by God throughout the ages. Human experiences are tainted with human opinions and knowledge, and this is something which is unavoidable. In many of the books of the Bible are human notions, human biases, and humans' distorted comprehension. Of course, most of the words are the result of the enlightenment and illumination of the Holy Spirit, and they are correct understandings—yet it still cannot be said that they are entirely accurate expressions of the truth. Their views on certain things are nothing more than knowledge derived from personal experience, or the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit. The foretelling of the prophets was personally instructed by God: The prophecies of the like of Isaiah, Daniel, Ezra, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel came from the direct instruction of the Holy Spirit; these people were seers, they had received the Spirit of

prophecy, and they were all prophets of the Old Testament. During the Age of Law, these people, who had received the inspirations of Jehovah, spoke many prophecies, which were directly instructed by Jehovah”

(The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. Concerning the Bible (3)).

While we read God’s words, Pastor Cao listened intently, nodding from time to time. After that, I fellowshiped, “Almighty God’s words are very clear—the Bible simply documents the previous two stages of God’s work. Besides the words of Jehovah God and the Lord Jesus, and the prophecies of the prophets, the rest is historical record and human experience. The Bible contains not only the words of God, but also those of man, and Satan. We must distinguish between these, and not mix them up. It’s like how the Old Testament records the prophecies of prophets like Isaiah, Elijah, or Ezekiel. Before their words, it always says something like ‘Thus saith Jehovah,’ or ‘Jehovah spake unto’—proving they were conveying God’s words directly. The epistles, however, are human experience, a human record. Letters to the churches, like Paul’s, were his own experiential understanding. When brothers and sisters back then received Paul’s letters, they’d say ‘A letter from Paul has come.’ They’d never say ‘God’s words have arrived,’ right? So the epistles cannot be said to be the words of God. To take the words of man and Satan in the Bible, and claim them as the words of God, isn’t this a blasphemy? That means, this belief that ‘The Bible is entirely inspired by God, and is entirely God’s words’ is fundamentally incorrect.”

When I finished, he was stunned. He told me excitedly, “I remember my theology teacher telling me that everything in the Bible is wholly inspired by God, and is God’s word. That’s what we’ve been saying all these years. Could Paul have been wrong about that?” Hearing him ask this, my heart skipped a beat. I’d just seen him nodding along, and thought that

he understood, but he hadn't understood at all. Was Pastor Cao just like those other religious leaders, unable to understand God's words? But then I thought, "This old pastor has clung to religious notions for decades—can he put them aside so easily? I have to fellowship patiently." Next, I said, "Let's not worry about whether Paul was right or wrong for now. Let's get down to facts. Pastor Cao, you must know how the Bible was composed. How many years after the Lord did Paul write 2 Timothy?" Without hesitation, he said it was more than sixty years later. "And how many years after the Lord was the New Testament composed?" He said it was more than three hundred years later. So I said, "Now let's think—when Paul wrote 2 Timothy, did the New Testament exist?" Startled, he said, "No." I continued, "If not, then do Paul's words, 'All scripture is given by inspiration of God,' include the New Testament?" His eyes widened, and he said, "I understand. Paul's words couldn't have included the New Testament. Thank the Lord! How did I not think of it before? In all these years of faith, we've always believed that 'All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is His words,' and have preached about this everywhere. We never questioned the truth of this statement. Through this fellowship, I now understand—the Bible is not entirely God's words and my decades-old notion must be rectified. Thank God!" Seeing Pastor Cao's notion resolved, I felt more confident preaching the gospel to him.

So I then fellowshiped with him that God had become flesh to do His judgment work in the last days, expressing millions of words of truth—unlocking not only the Bible's mysteries, but also all the mysteries of His 6,000-year management plan, like the mysteries of the three stages of His work, of His names, and of His incarnation. Almighty God had also disclosed the truth of man's corruption by Satan, man's satanic nature of resistance to God, and various satanic dispositions, and had pointed out the

way for us to rid ourselves of sin and be saved by Him. These truths expressed by Almighty God were the words of the Holy Spirit to the churches, the way of eternal life given to mankind by God in the last days, and the only way to be saved and enter God's kingdom. He accepted all this, but still had notions about God becoming flesh in the last days as female. He said to me, "I can now accept Almighty God's work of judgment and cleansing, but how can you testify that the Lord Jesus has become flesh as a woman? The last time He came, He was a man—and the Bible often speaks of Him as the 'Son'—so He would have to be male when He returns. How could He be female? It's inconceivable to me! Could you give me some fellowship on this?" I said, "For thousands of years, all believers have thought that since the Lord Jesus came as a man, He would surely return as a man, certainly not as a woman. And yet, Almighty God has become flesh as a woman in the last days—many struggle to accept this. But we must understand the more notions people have about something, the more truth there is to be found. In the Bible, when the Lord Jesus' return is prophesied, it always mentions '**the Son of man,**' '**the Son of man is revealed,**' '**the coming of the Son of man,**' '**the Son of man came,**' and '**the Son of man in His day.**' What does this 'Son of man' mean? When this is mentioned, it means a person born of a human, and having normal humanity—no matter whether they're male or female. So why did the Lord Jesus repeatedly emphasize this phrase, '**Son of man**'? He was telling us that in the last days, God would return incarnate, as the Son of man, to manifest and work. But the Lord never said whether the Son of man in the last days would be male or female. So how can people arbitrarily delimit Him? We all know Genesis Chapter 1, Verse 27: 'God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him; male and female created He them.' Here we can see in the beginning God created

man and woman in His image. If we determine God as male, then how can we explain God also creating woman in His own image? So we cannot delimit God on the basis of our own notions or imaginings.” Then, I read Pastor Cao some passages of Almighty God’s words.

Almighty God says: **“Each stage of work done by God has its own practical significance. Back then, when Jesus came, He came in male form, and when God comes this time, His form is female. From this, you can see that God’s creation of both men and women can be of use in His work, and with Him there is no distinction of gender. When His Spirit comes, He can take on any flesh He pleases, and that flesh can represent Him; whether male or female, it can represent God as long as it is His incarnate flesh. If Jesus had appeared as a female when He came, in other words, if an infant girl, and not a boy, had been conceived by the Holy Spirit, that stage of work would have been completed all the same. If that had been the case, then the present stage of work would have to be completed by a male instead, but the work would be completed all the same. The work done in each stage has its significance; neither stage of work is repeated, nor does it conflict with the other”** (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. The Two Incarnations Complete the Significance of the Incarnation). **“In gender, one is male and the other female, so completing the significance of God’s incarnation, and dispelling man’s notions of God: God can become both male and female, and in essence, the incarnate God is genderless. He made both man and woman, and to Him, there is no division of gender”** (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. The Essence of the Flesh Inhabited by God). **“If God came into the flesh only as a male, people would define Him as male, as the God of men, and would never believe Him to be the God of women. Men would then hold that God is of the same gender as men, that God**

is the head of men—but what then of women? This is unfair; is it not preferential treatment? If this were the case, then all those whom God saved would be men like Him, and not one woman would be saved. When God created mankind, He created Adam and He created Eve. He did not only create Adam, but made both male and female in His image. God is not only the God of men—He is also the God of women”

(The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. The Vision of God’s Work (3)).

I continued to fellowship, “We all know that in the beginning God created man and woman in His image. So, naturally, God can become flesh as a man, but also as a woman. If God became incarnate twice as a man, then humans may delimit Him, and believe that He can only become flesh as a male, not as a female—that He is only the God of men, not the God of women—isn’t this a great misunderstanding of Him? This would mean eternal discrimination against women. It would be truly unfair to women. God first became incarnate as a male, and in the last days, as a female. This is very significant. It shows perfectly God’s righteous disposition, and that He treats men and women equally. This has completed the meaning of His creation of man and woman. In fact, it doesn’t matter if God incarnates as a male or a female. As long as this person can express truth, and do the work of saving mankind, they can represent God, and are the incarnate God Himself. In the last days, Almighty God has come. He is expressing all the truths that purify and save man, doing His work of judgment in the last days, ushering in the Age of Kingdom, and ending the Age of Grace. This proves conclusively that Almighty God is the incarnate God, and is the Lord Jesus returned.”

At that point, Pastor Cao told me quite seriously, “Sister, everything you’ve said is reasonable and I can’t refute it. But there’s still something I can’t quite figure out. In Genesis 3:16, God says: **‘Your desire shall be to**

your husband, and he shall rule over you.' And 1 Corinthians 11:3 says: 'The head of the woman is the man.' From these texts we can see that woman is the source of corruption, and is subject to man's rule. So how could the Lord return as a woman?" Hearing Pastor Cao's words, I thought, "I've read so many of God's words to you, and fellowshiped with you so much, yet still you are delimiting God as male and cannot accept the fact of His incarnation as female. It seems that you can't put aside your notions so easily." But then I thought, "His notions are due to deviations in his understanding of scripture. If he understands the truth, these notions will be eliminated." I said to him, "Pastor Cao, Almighty God has spoken on this matter very clearly. Let's take a look at what He says."

Almighty God says: **"In times past, when it was said that man was woman's head, this was directed at Adam and Eve, who had been beguiled by the serpent—not at man and woman as they had been created by Jehovah in the beginning. Of course, a woman must obey and love her husband, and a husband must learn to feed and support his family. These are the laws and decrees set forth by Jehovah that humankind must abide by in their lives on earth. Jehovah said to woman, 'Your desire shall be to your husband, and he shall rule over you.' He spoke thus only so that humankind (that is, both man and woman) might live normal lives under the dominion of Jehovah, and so that the lives of humankind might have a structure, and not fall out of their proper order. Therefore, Jehovah made appropriate rules for how man and woman should act, though this was only in regard to all the created beings living on the earth, and bore no relation to God's incarnate flesh. How could God be the same as His created beings? His words were directed only toward the humankind of His creation; it was in order for humankind to live normal lives that He established rules**

for man and woman. In the beginning, when Jehovah created humankind, He made two kinds of human being, both male and female; and so there is the division of male and female in His incarnate flesh. He did not decide His work based on the words He spoke to Adam and Eve. The two times He has become flesh have been determined entirely according to His thinking at the time He first created humankind; that is, He has completed the work of His two incarnations based on the male and the female before they were corrupted. ... When Jehovah twice became flesh, the gender of His flesh was related to the male and the female who had not been beguiled by the serpent; it was in accordance with the male and the female who had not been beguiled by the serpent that He twice became flesh. Do not think that the maleness of Jesus was the same as that of Adam, who was beguiled by the serpent. The two are completely unrelated, they are males of two different natures. Surely it cannot be that the maleness of Jesus proves He is the head of all women but not of all men? Is He not the King of all the Jews (including both men and women)? He is God Himself, not just the head of woman but the head of man as well. He is the Lord of all created beings and the head of all created beings. How could you determine the maleness of Jesus to be the symbol of the head of woman? Would this not be blasphemy? Jesus is a male who has not been corrupted. He is God; He is Christ; He is the Lord. How could He be a male like Adam who was corrupted? Jesus is the flesh worn by the most holy Spirit of God. How could you say He is a God who possesses the maleness of Adam? In that case, would not all of God's work have been wrong? Would Jehovah have incorporated within Jesus the maleness of Adam who was beguiled by the serpent? Is not the incarnation of the present time another instance of the work of God

incarnate, who is different in gender from Jesus but like Him in nature? Do you still dare say that God incarnate could not be female, because woman was the first to be beguiled by the serpent? Do you still dare say that, as woman is the most unclean and the source of the corruption of humankind, God could not possibly become flesh as a female? Do you dare to persist in saying that ‘woman shall always obey man and may never manifest or directly represent God’?” (The Word, Vol.

1. The Appearance and Work of God. The Two Incarnations Complete the Significance of the Incarnation).

After reading God’s words, I continued, “From Almighty God’s words we can see that when God said to the woman, **‘Your desire shall be to your husband, and he shall rule over you,’** this was His requirement and restraint for corrupt humanity, so that corrupt humanity could live under Jehovah God’s dominion in an orderly manner. This requirement has nothing whatsoever to do with God incarnate. It’s just like in the Old Testament, when Jehovah God commanded man to keep the Sabbath. This was what God asked of man—man couldn’t ask this of the Lord Jesus. Just as the Lord Jesus said: **‘The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath: Therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath’** (Mark 2:27–28). So, although the Bible says, **‘Your desire shall be to your husband, and he shall rule over you’** (Genesis 3:16), **‘The head of the woman is the man’** (1 Corinthians 11:3), these things have nothing at all to do with God incarnate. No matter if God incarnates as male or female, it is always the flesh worn by His Spirit, and it is always God Himself. If man uses these words to delimit God as male, unable to become female, and denies God incarnate in the last days, isn’t this putting God incarnate in the same category as corrupt man? Isn’t this blasphemy against God?” Having listened to me, the pastor was stunned. He said quite gravely, “Sister, since

the Lord has come in the flesh, He would have to be human born, and have a gender. But I just can't immediately accept that He has incarnated as female this time. I need to pray and ask the Lord to enlighten me."

When the pastor said this, I was a little anxious and puzzled. I'd fellowshiped so much—why could he still not put his notions aside? What on earth was going on? Could he not understand God's word? Is he not one of God's sheep? Should I continue talking with him? What lessons should I learn from this? In my heart, I prayed to God. I then recalled God's words: **"In spreading the gospel, people must fulfill their responsibility and deal with every potential gospel recipient earnestly. God saves man to the greatest extent possible, and people must be considerate of God's intentions, they must not carelessly pass over anyone who is seeking and investigating the true way. ... Some people who are investigating the true way have comprehension ability and are of great caliber, but are arrogant and self-righteous. They adhere tightly to religious notions, so you should fellowship about the truth to them with love and patience to help solve this. You should only give up if they do not accept the truth no matter how you fellowship with them—then you will have done everything you can"** (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. Spreading the Gospel Is the Duty to Which All Believers Are Honor-Bound). God's words quieted my anxious heart. God requires us to be loving and patient with potential gospel recipients. No matter if they accept the gospel in the end, we have to do all that we possibly can. I realized that I hadn't yet done all that I ought to when sharing the gospel with Pastor Cao. I hadn't met God's requirements. Seeing him clinging to the Bible, still unable to change his mind, I thought he'd never comprehend the truth. He'd had notions about God's female incarnation and hadn't immediately understood my fellowship, so I'd lost patience again. I bore prejudice toward Pastor Cao,

thinking pastors couldn't easily recognize the voice of God. Once he had a notion that couldn't be overcome, I'd passed verdict on him, even wanting to give up on him. I thought of how God has made painstaking efforts to save corrupt mankind, and how He has expressed so many words to provide for and nourish us. To help us understand the truth, He fellowships with us, explaining each truth inside and out. He speaks in stories and metaphors, and from all angles, to provide sufficient detail and clarity. I saw that God's love for humanity and the price He has paid for us are so great that they cannot be put into words. But in my duty to spread the gospel, I'd shied away from difficulty and wanted to give up on Pastor Cao. Where was my loving heart? How could I fulfill my duty like this? Though Pastor Cao hadn't come around right away, I couldn't be impatient. I had to treat him with love, and if he didn't understand, I had to spend more time in fellowship, pray to and rely on God, and ask Him to enlighten and lead the pastor. Thinking about this, I continued to fellowship with Pastor Cao, "When we believe in Almighty God, we believe in the truth that He has expressed. No matter whether God's incarnation is male or female, so long as He expresses the truth, and can purify and save mankind, He is God Himself, so we must believe in and accept Him. Almighty God has been working for over thirty years, expressing millions of words. He's expressed all the truths that will rid mankind of sin and bring us to God's salvation. Many who yearned for God to appear, from all the denominations, have recognized God's voice in the words of Almighty God and turned to Him. These people are all the wise virgins. They experienced the judgment and chastisement of God's words, saw the truth of their own corruption, felt regret, and despised themselves. Realizing that God's righteous disposition does not tolerate offense, they had a God-fearing heart, truly repented, and their corrupt dispositions gradually changed. Almighty God has made a

group of overcomers before the disasters—they are the first fruits prophesied in Revelation. Almighty God’s words and the experiential testimonies of God’s chosen people in triumph over Satan were posted online long ago, testifying to all mankind that the Savior has returned. More and more people from all nations are now investigating the true way. Almighty God’s work of the last days ends God’s six-thousand-year management plan of saving mankind, completely saving us from Satan’s power. Everything accomplished by the work of Almighty God proves conclusively that Almighty God is the incarnate God, that is, the returned Lord Jesus. This means that determining if Almighty God is the Lord Jesus returned, can’t be done based on gender. The key is to see whether He can express the truth and do the work of saving mankind.” At this point, Pastor Cao said solemnly, “Sister, I can understand your fellowship. If someone can express the truth and carry out the work of salvation, then no matter whether male or female, they are God incarnate. Now, my heart has been brightened.”

After that, Pastor Cao read a lot more of Almighty God’s words, his notions were resolved, and he accepted God’s work of the last days.

Through this experience of sharing the gospel, I saw that God’s work is all done by God Himself. Whether it’s a pastor or an elder, no matter their biblical knowledge, theological learning, or religious notions, they are all powerless before the truth. So long as they can understand God’s words, have comprehension abilities, and are willing to seek the truth, they can all find answers in God’s words, and will be conquered by them in the end. When I shared the gospel with Pastor Cao, I thought it would be difficult for pastors and elders to accept the truth, so I was prejudiced against Pastor Cao. While sharing the gospel with him, seeing that he was clinging to notions, I’d concluded that he couldn’t understand God’s voice, and nearly

gave up on him. Thankfully, God's words enlightened and guided me so that I was able to understand myself and fulfill my duty.

Later, I read a passage of God's words that clarified how to deal with potential gospel recipients who have strong religious notions. Almighty God says: **"If a person investigating the true way repeatedly asks a question, how should you respond? You should not mind taking the time and trouble to answer them, and should find a way to fellowship clearly about their question, until they understand and do not ask it again. You will then have fulfilled your responsibility, and your heart will be free of guilt. Most importantly, you will be free of guilt toward God in this matter, because this duty, this responsibility, was entrusted to you by God. When everything you do is done before God, done facing God, when everything is held up against God's word, and done according to the truth principles, then your practice will be entirely in accord with the truth and God's requirements. In this way, all that you do and say will be of benefit to people, and they will approve of and easily accept it"** (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. Spreading the Gospel Is the Duty to Which All Believers Are Honor-Bound). From God's words, I understood that no matter how many questions they have or how strong their religious notions are, if those investigating the true way have good humanity, yearn for the truth, and can understand God's words, then we shouldn't be prejudiced against or arbitrarily delimit them, let alone give up on them. Instead, we should practice God's words: **"You should not mind taking the time and trouble to answer them, and should find a way to fellowship clearly about their question."** We have to fellowship the truth that we understand to them as best we can until our conscience is clear. This is also our responsibility as a created being. In the future, no matter what kinds of potential gospel recipients I encounter, if they have good humanity

and understand God's words, I'm willing to do my best to fellowship the truth and bear witness to God, so that those who sincerely yearn for God's appearance may return to Him as soon as possible, and welcome the Lord's return. Thank God!

23. Why I Didn't Want to Pay a Price in My Duty

By Cynthia, South Korea

I was working in graphic design in the church, and once, the team leader assigned me to create a new type of image. Because I wasn't very experienced at the time, and didn't know the principles or essentials of the task, even though I put a ton of effort into it, what I came up with wasn't that great. I edited it several more times without seeing much improvement. I then felt that designing in this new style was really hard. Afterward, when the team leader told me to make another similar image, I was quite resistant. I kept thinking of ways to pass it off to someone else, and even purposefully said, in front of the team leader, that I wasn't good at those sorts of designs. She could see what I was thinking and stopped assigning those jobs to me. Later on, the church leader asked me to edit an image at the last minute and had the team leader give me some detailed instructions. It was kind of urgent, and I had to edit its form based on the original composition as fast as possible, and polish up the more detailed parts. It sounded simple to me. Since it already had its basic shape, some minor adjustments should be enough. But the team leader wasn't satisfied with my edits and gave me some suggestions about how to fix it. It seemed like a hassle and I didn't want to do it. I felt like the image was basically okay—if it was usable, that was enough. Was it really necessary to go into that much detail fixing it? It would waste quite a bit of time and energy. So I decided to share my thoughts. But to my surprise, the team leader sent me this message, “You don't put your heart into your duty or try to achieve good results. You're always trying to save yourself trouble and being perfunctory. How can you do a duty well with that kind of attitude?” Seeing this string of criticisms put me into a state of turmoil, and I felt wronged. Was I really that bad? A

few days later, the church leader pruned me for coveting the comforts of the flesh and shrinking from anything difficult. She said I wanted to avoid the hassle of difficult designs, and didn't work hard on them, that I was always muddling through my duty, and couldn't be relied on. Hearing her say that really hit home for me. Even a sister who knew me well said bluntly, "As a designer, if you don't put thought into producing good designs, how is that doing your duty?" Hearing that was like having cold water dumped on me, chilling me to the core. I felt like my time doing my duty was probably up—everyone knew what sort of person I was, so no one would trust me from then on.

That evening, I thought back over everything that had happened recently and the others' assessments of me. I was really upset and hated myself for letting everyone down. Why did I do my duty like that? I cried and cried. In my misery, I read this in God's words: **"When doing a duty, people always pick light work, work that isn't tiring, and that does not involve braving the elements outdoors. This is picking easy jobs and shirking hard ones, and it is a manifestation of coveting the comforts of the flesh. What else? (Always complaining when their duty is a little hard, a little tiring, when it involves paying a price.) (Being preoccupied with food and clothing, and the pleasures of the flesh.) These are all manifestations of coveting the comforts of the flesh. When such a person sees that a task is too laborious or risky, they foist it off on someone else; they themselves only do leisurely work, and they make excuses, saying that they are of poor caliber, that they lack work ability, and cannot take on this task—when in fact, it is because they covet the comforts of the flesh. ... There's also when people always complain about difficulties while doing their duty, when they don't want to put any effort in, when, as soon as they have a little downtime, they take a**

rest, chatter idly, or partake in leisure and entertainment. And when work picks up and it breaks the rhythm and routine of their lives, they are unhappy and dissatisfied with it. They grumble and complain, and they become perfunctory in doing their duty. This is coveting the comforts of the flesh, is it not? ... Are people who indulge in the comforts of the flesh suitable for doing a duty? As soon as someone brings up the subject of doing their duty, or talks about paying a price and suffering hardship, they keep shaking their heads. They have too many problems, they are full of complaints, and they are filled with negativity. Such people are useless, they are not qualified to do their duty, and should be eliminated” (The Word, Vol. 5. The Responsibilities of Leaders and Workers. The Responsibilities of Leaders and Workers (2)). I saw from God’s words that just choosing simple, easy tasks in a duty, and always getting others to do the more complicated and difficult things isn’t about intellect or caliber. It’s being greedy for comfort, and being unwilling to pay a price. Looking back, when the team leader had me work on a new type of design, I felt that it was difficult because I had just started learning. I had to suffer, pay a price, carefully think it out and revise it repeatedly in order to do a good job. Not wanting the trouble, I’d retreated from it, and found an excuse to hand it off. I’d just wanted work that was simple and easy. When the church leader asked me to edit an image, the team leader gave me detailed instructions, hoping I could do a better job. Though I agreed to it, I thought it was a hassle, so I didn’t give it real thought or effort, just trying to make it easy for myself. I saw that no matter what it was, I was reluctant to do anything requiring much thought or effort. I was preoccupied with the flesh. I read in God’s words: “Such people are useless, they are not qualified to do their duty, and should be eliminated.” This made me a little afraid. I was always considering the flesh and craving comfort when doing my duty, and

not at all willing to suffer and pay a price. I only thought about saving myself trouble and not taxing my heart or mind. There was no sincerity or loyalty in the way I did my duty. I thought that if I could muddle through my tasks and get them done, then that was enough. I hadn't been playing a positive role. Moreover, I'd impacted the work's progress. If I'd kept on that way without changing, God would have eliminated me sooner or later.

One day, I read more of God's words: **“On the surface, some people do not seem to have any serious problems throughout the time they perform their duties. They do nothing overtly evil; they do not cause disruptions or disturbances, or walk the path of antichrists. In performing their duties, they do not have any major mistakes or problems of principle come up, yet, without realizing it, in a few short years they are revealed as not accepting the truth at all, as being one of the disbelievers. Why is this so? Others cannot see an issue, but God scrutinizes these people's innermost hearts, and He sees the problem. They have always been perfunctory and unrepentant in the performance of their duties. As time goes on, they are naturally revealed. What does it mean to remain unrepentant? It means that though they have performed their duties throughout, they have always had the wrong attitude toward them, an attitude of perfunctoriness, a casual attitude, and they are never conscientious, much less are they giving all their hearts to their duties. They may put in a little effort, but they are just going through the motions. They are not giving their all to their duties, and their transgressions are without end. In God's eyes, they have never repented; they have always been perfunctory, and there has never been any change in them—that is, they do not relinquish the evil in their hands and repent to Him. God does not see in them an attitude of repentance, and He does not see a reversal in**

their attitude. They are persistent in regarding their duties and God's commissions with such an attitude and such a method. Throughout, there is no change in this stubborn, intransigent disposition, and, what is more, they have never felt indebted to God, have never felt that their perfunctoriness is a transgression, an evildoing. In their hearts, there is no indebtedness, no guilt, no self-reproach, and much less is there self-accusation. And, as much time passes, God sees that this kind of person is beyond remedy. No matter what God says, and no matter how many sermons they hear or how much of the truth they understand, their heart is not moved and their attitude is not altered or turned around. God sees this and says: 'There is no hope for this person. Nothing I say touches their heart, and nothing I say turns them around. There is no means of changing them. This person is unfit to perform their duty, and they are unfit to labor in My house.' Why does God say this? It is because when they perform their duty and do work they are consistently perfunctory. No matter how much they are pruned, and no matter how much forbearance and patience are extended to them, it has no effect and cannot make them truly repent or change. It cannot make them do their duty well, it cannot allow them to embark on the path of pursuing the truth. So this person is beyond remedy. When God determines that a person is beyond remedy, will He still keep a tight hold on this person? He will not. God will let them go" (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. Part Three). "What is the standard by which a person's actions and behavior are judged to be good or evil? It is whether or not they, in their thoughts, revelations, and actions, possess the testimony of putting the truth into practice and of living out the truth reality. If you do not have this reality or live this out, then without doubt, you are an evildoer. How does God regard evildoers? To God,

your thoughts and external acts do not bear testimony for Him, nor do they humiliate and defeat Satan; instead, they bring shame to Him, and they are riddled with marks of the dishonor that you have brought upon Him. You are not testifying for God, you are not expending yourself for God, nor are you fulfilling your responsibilities and obligations to God; instead, you are acting for your own sake. What does ‘for your own sake’ mean? To be precise, it means for Satan’s sake. Therefore, in the end, God will say, ‘Depart from Me, you that work iniquity.’ In God’s eyes, your actions will not be seen as good deeds, they will be considered evil deeds. Not only will they fail to gain God’s approval—they will be condemned. What does one hope to gain from such a belief in God? Would such belief not come to naught in the end?” (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. Freedom and Liberation Can Be Gained Only by Casting Off One’s Corrupt Disposition).

I used to think that even though I’d passed off the harder, more complicated projects, I was never idle and sometimes I’d work late into the night for a design. I felt that doing my duty this way was enough. I saw from God’s words that He doesn’t look at how much work we’ve done or effort we’ve expended, but rather our approach to our duty, whether we’re considering God’s intention, and whether we possess the testimony of practicing the truth. That’s how He decides if a person’s duty will gain His approval. Though it looked like I’d been doing my duty the whole time, I had a casual, perfunctory attitude toward it, just considering the flesh and indulging myself. I did whatever was easy for me and shrugged off whatever was hard, without the slightest loyalty or submission. Doing my duty like this didn’t even meet the standard for laboring, it was trying to fool and deceive God. I thought of how the team leader assigned some important tasks to me when I’d just started, but because I was always muddling through my duty, gravitating

toward easy things, and not considering the church's work, only my flesh, she stopped giving me important projects. I became someone that neither God nor other people could count on, and that could just labor doing simple tasks. By treating my duty that way, I was not preparing good deeds; rather I was amassing transgressions. If I didn't let go of this evil and repent to God, He would spurn me as my transgressions multiplied, and I'd be fully revealed and eliminated by Him. At that point it dawned on me how dangerous my attitude toward my duty was and this made me feel a little afraid. I also realized that being pruned this time was God's reminder and warning for me. I was too numb, too slow on the uptake! If it hadn't been for the others really rubbing my nose in it, I wouldn't have seen that my attitude toward my duty disgusted God. I knew I had to change this incorrect state of mine right away and repent to God, and stop being intransigent and rebellious.

I read more of God's words about my state of pandering to the flesh and seeking ease. God's words say: **"No matter what work some people do or what duty they perform, they are incompetent in it, they cannot shoulder it, and they are incapable of fulfilling any of the obligations or responsibilities that a person ought to. Are they not trash? Are they still worthy of being called human? With the exception of simpletons, the mentally incompetent, and those who suffer from physical impairments, is there anyone alive who ought not to do their duties and fulfill their responsibilities? But this kind of person is always slippery and slacking off, and does not wish to fulfill their responsibilities; the implication is that they do not wish to be a proper human being. God gave them the opportunity to be a human being, and He gave them caliber and gifts, yet they cannot use these in doing their duty. They do nothing, but wish to relish enjoyment at every turn. Is such a person fit**

to be called a human being? No matter what work is given to them—whether it be important or ordinary, difficult or simple—they are always perfunctory and slippery and slacking off. When problems arise, they try to push responsibility for them onto other people, taking no responsibility, and they wish to keep living their parasitic lives. Are they not useless trash?” (The Word, Vol. 5. The Responsibilities of Leaders and Workers. The Responsibilities of Leaders and Workers (8)). **“What kind of people are trash? Muddleheaded people, people who idle their days away. People of this sort are not responsible in anything they do, nor do they take it seriously; they make a mess of everything. They do not heed your words no matter how you fellowship the truth with them. They think, ‘I’ll muddle along like this if I want to. What does it matter? In any case, right now I’m doing my duty and I’ve got food to eat, that’s good enough. At least I don’t have to be a beggar. If I have nothing to eat one day, I’ll think about it then. Heaven will always leave a door open. You say that I have no conscience or reason, and that I’m muddleheaded—well, so what? I haven’t broken the law. At the very most, I’m just a little lacking in character, but that’s no loss to me. So long as I have food to eat, it’s fine.’ What do you think of this perspective? I say to you, muddleheaded people like this who idle their days away are all destined to be eliminated, and there is no way they can achieve salvation. All those who have believed in God for several years but have never accepted any of the truth and are without experiential testimonies will be eliminated. None will survive. Trash and good-for-nothings are all freeloaders and they are destined to be eliminated. If leaders and workers are just freeloaders, all the more must they be dismissed and eliminated. Muddleheaded people like this still want to be leaders and workers; they are unworthy! They do not do any real**

work, yet they want to be leaders. They truly have no shame!” (The Word, Vol. 5. The Responsibilities of Leaders and Workers. The Responsibilities of Leaders and Workers (8)). God’s harsh exposure made me realize that if a person is always being perfunctory in a duty, never taking responsibility, it means they’re the same as trash. If they don’t put their heart into anything, if they’re always slacking off, drifting through life, not doing their proper duties, or learning new skills, then they’re useless. I reflected and saw that’s how I was in my duty. No matter what job I was given, I didn’t want to give it any hard thought, suffer, or strive for being effective in my duty. I was content to just look busy and not be idle. Wasn’t I just messing around by doing my duty that way? It also occurred to me that since I was little, I’d always envied people in well off families who didn’t have a care in the world, who could travel around and have a comfortable, easy life. I was dying to have that kind of life for myself. I felt that as we humans only live for a few decades, if we don’t enjoy ourselves, isn’t that a life lived in vain? After growing up, I saw everyone else working hard to make money, so I started a business. But I still didn’t want to expend too much energy, and I was always absorbed in TV shows and novels. I didn’t give much thought to my business and didn’t care if I made money or not. By the end of the year, not only had I failed to earn anything, but I’d lost money. But that still didn’t upset me too much. I just comforted myself, thinking that a few losses didn’t matter as long as there was food on the table. My outlook on life was “Drink today’s wine today, and worry about tomorrow, tomorrow,” and “Life is short, so enjoy it while you can.” Since I’d been influenced by these satanic thoughts, I never attended to my proper duties, and didn’t strive for progress; I didn’t have a goal in life. I was still living by these thoughts after becoming a believer. I felt like always taking it easy in my duty, not taxing myself, thinking too hard, or being stressed was a great way

to live. But in fact, I couldn't shoulder any kind of work. I wasn't useful for anything, I was just like trash. The more I reflected on my behavior, the more surprised I felt. Wasn't I precisely the sort of parasite that God was exposing? To save humanity, God has not only expressed His words and provided us with the truth and life, He has also bestowed us with all that we need to survive and allowed us to enjoy it in abundance. He cares for and protects us, keeping us from falling into Satan's traps. But I was inattentive. I didn't know to repay God's love in my duty, and instead became a lazy parasite. Being poisoned and influenced by this satanic thought, I only sought pleasures and indulgences of the flesh. I'd never seriously considered proper things or how to do my duty well to satisfy God. At that point in my reflection, I felt nausea and disgust for myself, as well as contempt. I felt that I truly had been too deeply corrupted by Satan. I'd lost all conscience and reason, and become very numb. I also saw how Satan uses these thoughts to paralyze people and make us more and more depraved. Ultimately, we become garbage, just like walking corpses without a soul. I was so regretful that I hadn't done my duty properly, that I hadn't done a single thing to comfort God. I felt really indebted to God and prayed, "God, I've been so profoundly corrupted by Satan. Without Your revelation, I'd never have seen how serious my problem is. I've been irresponsible in my duty and lacking humanity, enjoying so much of Your grace but never knowing to repay Your love. I've been a parasite. I will rebel against the flesh and repent to You, consciously seek the truth, and do my duty according to Your requirements."

I read another passage of God's words later. Almighty God says: **"Since you are a person, you should contemplate what a person's responsibilities are. Responsibilities that the nonbelievers hold in the highest esteem, such as being filial, providing for your parents, and**

making a name for your family need not be mentioned. These are all empty and devoid of any real meaning. What is the very minimum responsibility that a person should fulfill? Most practical is how you do your duty well today. Only ever being satisfied with going through the motions is not fulfilling your responsibilities, and only being able to speak about words and doctrines is not fulfilling your responsibilities. Only practicing the truth and doing things according to principle is fulfilling your responsibilities. Only when your practicing of the truth has been effective, and of benefit to people, will you have truly fulfilled your responsibility. No matter what duty you are doing, only when you persist in acting according to the truth principles in all things, will you have truly fulfilled your responsibility. Going through the motions according to the human way of doing things is to be perfunctory; only adhering to the truth principles is properly doing your duty and fulfilling your responsibility. And when you fulfill your responsibility, is this not the manifestation of loyalty? This is the manifestation of loyalty toward your duty. Only when you have this sense of responsibility, this will and desire, and this manifestation of loyalty with regard to your duty, shall God favor you, and look upon you with approval. If you don't even have this sense of responsibility, God will treat you as an idler, a blockhead, and will despise you. ... What is God's expectation of a person to whom He has allocated a particular task in the church? Firstly, God hopes that they are responsible, that they treat the task with great importance, and do it well. Secondly, God hopes they are a person who is worthy of trust, that no matter how much time passes, and no matter how their environment changes, their sense of responsibility does not waver, and their character stands up to the test. If they are a trustworthy person, God will be reassured. He will no

longer monitor or follow up on this matter because inside, God trusts them. When God gives them this task, they are sure to complete it without any slipups. When God entrusts a task to people, is this not His wish? (It is.) Then once you understand God's intention, you should then know in your heart how to meet God's requirements, how to get God to find favor in you, and how to get God to trust you. If you can see clearly your own performance and behavior, and the attitude with which you approach your duty, if you have self-knowledge, and you know what you are, is it not then unreasonable for you to demand that God find favor in you and show you grace, or give you special treatment? (Yes, it is.) Even you look down on yourself, even you despise yourself, so it does not make sense for you to demand that God find favor in you. As such, if you want God to find favor in you, other people should at least be able to trust you. If you want others to trust you, to favor you, to think well of you, then at the very least you must be dignified, responsible, true to your word, and trustworthy. And then in front of God, you must be responsible and loyal—then you have mostly fulfilled God's requirements of you. Then there is hope of you gaining God's approval, is there not? (Yes, there is.)" (The Word, Vol. 5. The Responsibilities of Leaders and Workers. The Responsibilities of Leaders and Workers (8)). I learned from God's words that each person has their own responsibilities and obligations, and that to live with dignity and value, what's key is whether we're able to fulfill our responsibility in our duties and treat every task given by God seriously and attentively. We shouldn't need others to constantly exhort and remind us but should have a sense of responsibility. No matter how things turn out, what's important is how a person puts their heart into what they're doing. Only those with that kind of attitude have integrity and dignity, and can be relied on, and will have their actions

remembered by God. Understanding God's intention was enlightening for me and gave me a path of practice. In my duty after that, I often reminded myself to be more attentive, to seek the truth principles, and strive to do the best that I could.

Once when a sister and I were talking about the plan for an image, she mentioned that we had to use Western styles as references, and make it impressive. When she said "impressive" I felt like that would be difficult, and though I knew Western styles looked nice, making all sorts of decorative effects would be complicated. Other sisters had always done those kinds of designs before, and I wasn't very skilled at it. Making it turn out well would be really hard for me, and take lots of time and energy. I felt hesitant and wanted to turn it down, to have another sister do it, but then I thought of a passage of God's words I'd read before: **"Suppose the church gives you a job to do, and you say, '... Whatever job the church assigns me, I'll take it up with all my heart and strength. If there's something I don't understand or a problem comes up, I'll pray to God, seek the truth, resolve problems according to the truth principles, and do the thing well. Whatever my duty, I'll use everything I have to do it well and satisfy God. For whatever I can achieve, I will do my best to take on the responsibility that I should bear, and at the least, I will not go against my conscience and reason, or be perfunctory, or be slippery and slack off, or indulge in the fruits of others' labor. Nothing I do will be beneath the standards of conscience.' This is the minimum standard of human comportment, and one who does their duty in such a way may qualify as a person with conscience and reason. You must at least be clear of conscience in doing your duty, and you must at least be worthy of your three meals a day and not be freeloading. This is called having a sense of responsibility. Whether your caliber is high or low,**

and whether or not you understand the truth, in any case, you must have this attitude: ‘Since this work was given to me to do, I must treat it seriously, I must make it my concern, and I must use all my heart and strength to do it well. As for whether I can do it perfectly well, I can’t presume to offer a guarantee, but my attitude is that I’ll do my best to perform it well, and I certainly won’t be perfunctory about it. If a problem arises in work, I should take responsibility then, and ensure I draw a lesson from it and do my duty well.’ This is the right attitude”

(The Word, Vol. 5. The Responsibilities of Leaders and Workers. The Responsibilities of Leaders and Workers (8)). I thought of how irresponsible I’d been in my duty before. I was always muddling through it and did lots of things that disgusted God. This time I couldn’t pander to the flesh and crave comfort. I had to consider God’s intention and take responsibility for my duty. I silently resolved that regardless of how much I could achieve, first I had to submit and work hard. Doing my best was most important. With these thoughts, I felt like I had a direction. I thought over the principles of our work and got some reference materials together, then made several versions and sent them to other sisters for suggestions. After some revisions it was finally finished. I had a sense of peace in my heart when I did things that way and felt like I was more pragmatic than before.

After that, I focused on self-reflection and rebelling against the flesh in my duty. I made sure to put more thought into the little things in my daily life and tasks assigned to me by the church, and to think of how to do my duty better. In fact, this didn’t really tire me out, but instead I felt fulfilled. Comporting ourselves in this way really is wonderful! Though sometimes I still want to consider the flesh and indulge myself, I have better awareness of my corruption than before. Once I realize it’s revealed, I will pray right away and ask God to help me rebel against the flesh, and ask Him to

discipline me if I'm perfunctory, deceptive and irresponsible again. Over time, I've been able to bear a burden in my duty, and willing to shoulder my responsibilities and fulfill my duty. This is the only way to live with integrity, dignity, and inner peace.

24. Hanging by a Thread

By Zhang Hui, China

Not long after I accepted Almighty God's work of the last days, I shared the gospel with a brother from my old church. Then one afternoon, Pastor Li and Co-worker Wang showed up at my house. My heart was pounding. I wondered, "What have they come for? Do they know I've accepted Almighty God? When other church members accepted Almighty God, they'd started rumors, intimidated them, and got their families to oppose their faith. What kinds of tactics will they use against me?" My son and daughter showed up pretty soon. I was puzzled. My kids had said they were really busy, so why would both of them come today? Had Pastor Li arranged that? I realized that they'd prepared for this in advance. I prayed to God right away, "Oh God, I don't know what they're going to try with me. I'm too small in stature to know how to face this. Please guide me and help me stay strong on the true way." I felt calmer after praying.

Just then, Pastor Li smiled and said, "Brother Zhang, I've heard that you've accepted Eastern Lightning now. Is that true? No matter how much truth there is in Eastern Lightning, we cannot accept it. We've all believed in the Lord for many years, and have preached and worked for Him. We all know that the Lord Jesus was crucified and became a sin offering, which redeemed us from our sin. We must uphold the name and the way of the Lord at all times. We cannot believe in another God. By departing from the Lord Jesus and believing in Almighty God, aren't you betraying the Lord?" I was unruffled, and said calmly, "Pastor Li, we have to be objective and practical. We must go by the evidence and not just arbitrarily condemn it. You haven't investigated the way of Eastern Lightning or read Almighty God's words, so how can you conclude that I'm betraying the Lord by

accepting Eastern Lightning? Do you know where the truth comes from? Do you know who expresses the truth? The Lord Jesus said: **‘I am the way, the truth, and the life’** (John 14:6). God is the source of the truth. How can you say that no matter how much truth there is in Eastern Lightning, we can’t accept it? Isn’t that intentionally resisting the truth, and resisting God? Do we even count as believers in the Lord then? I’ve read a lot of Almighty God’s words lately, and I’ve seen that they are all the truth, that they reveal many truths and mysteries. All my struggles through my years of faith have been resolved through Almighty God’s words. I firmly believe that Almighty God is the return of the Lord Jesus. To follow Almighty God is to welcome the Lord’s coming. You say faith in Almighty God is a betrayal of the Lord Jesus. Does that accord with the truth? When the Lord Jesus came to work, lots of people left the temple to follow Him. Does that mean they betrayed Jehovah God? Although the Lord Jesus’ work of redemption was different from the work of proclaiming the law that Jehovah God did, and God’s name changed as well, the Lord Jesus and Jehovah are the one same God. By believing in the Lord Jesus, they were not betraying Jehovah God, but they were following the footsteps of the Lamb and gaining God’s salvation. In fact, those who believed in Jehovah God but did not accept the Lord Jesus were the ones who were forsaking God and betraying Him. Almighty God’s work is different from the Lord Jesus’ and God’s name has changed, but They are one God. God just does different work in different ages. The Lord Jesus did the work of redemption in the Age of Grace, which was only forgiving our sins. He didn’t resolve mankind’s sinful nature. That’s why He promised He’d come again to do the work of judgment. Almighty God has come in the last days, expressing truths to judge us on the foundation of the Lord’s work of redemption to resolve our satanic dispositions and sinful nature, and fully save us from sin so we can

be gained by God. Almighty God's work and words completely fulfill the Lord Jesus' prophecies. My belief in Almighty God is not a betrayal of the Lord Jesus. It is following the footsteps of the Lamb. Wouldn't believing in the Lord Jesus without accepting Almighty God's work of the last days make us just like the Pharisees, who only believed in Jehovah God and rejected the Lord Jesus? It's those sorts of people who resist and betray the Lord. You should properly look into Almighty God's work of the last days and see for yourselves if His words are God's voice. Don't arbitrarily judge and condemn it, or you could be condemned for opposing the Lord."

When I finished saying those words, Pastor Li looked really uncomfortable, so Co-worker Wang rushed to smooth things over saying, "We're opposed to Eastern Lightning and don't want our members involved in it to protect the church, to look after the flock. How could the Lord condemn us for that? Pastor Li feels a sense of responsibility for your life. He doesn't want you to take the wrong path. You've been a co-worker, and you've done so much for the church. Everyone respects and trusts you. They'd all be so disappointed if you left to go believe in Almighty God!" Pastor Li rushed to chime in, "Brother Wang is right. You've worked so hard all these years. It would be such a shame to just walk away from the reputation and status you've built for yourself! Come back. Everyone's waiting for you. Our church has set up a retirement home, we've made connections with religious groups abroad and they're giving us financial support. If you come back, we'll provide a car for you right away. If you'd like to manage the retirement home, or manage the church, or continue to take care of the church's finances, that's all up to you." The more I listened to them, the more I felt something was off. How could believers say something like that? The devil Satan's temptation of the Lord Jesus in the Bible came to mind: "Again, the devil takes Him up into an exceeding high

mountain, and shows Him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; And said to Him, All these things will I give You, if You will fall down and worship me” (Matthew 4:8-9). Didn’t all those things they were saying have exactly the same tone as what Satan said? “This is a ruse of Satan’s!” I thought. “They’re luring me away from the true way using status and money, to betray Almighty God. They’re trying to trap me, to do me in.” I’d been a believer for over 10 years and was so lucky to welcome the Lord’s return. I knew I couldn’t be taken in by Satan and betray the Lord. So I said, “I’ve heard God’s voice and found the way of eternal life. I choose to follow God. You can save your breath. I will not depart from Almighty God.” Then my daughter started crying and said, “Dad, just listen to me for a moment! Mom just passed away. We’ve suffered enough. With you believing in Eastern Lightning and being expelled from the church, the brothers and sisters will shun us too!” I hated seeing my daughter cry like that. A fierce internal struggle arose within me: “If I agreed to rejoin the church, I wouldn’t be rejected and I’d keep my position, but that would be closing the door on the Lord. That would be a betrayal of the Lord.” There were no easy options. In the midst of this pain I silently cried out to God, “Oh Almighty God, I’m caught between a rock and a hard place. Please give me faith and strength to avoid being disturbed by them, and so I can take a stance and resolutely follow You.” Some of Almighty God’s words I’d read a few days before came to mind just then: **“You must be awake and waiting at all times, and you must pray before Me more. You must recognize the various plots and cunning schemes of Satan, recognize the spirits, know people, and be able to discern all kinds of people, events, and things”** (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. Utterances of Christ in the Beginning, Chapter 17). God’s words gave me strength and alerted me that I needed to practice discernment. Satan’s tricks were behind what I was

faced with that day. Satan was using status and my concerns for my family to try to entice and attack me, disturbing my mind with the goal of having me betray God. I could not fall into Satan's trap! I said to my children, "I've looked into it and it's all clear. Almighty God is the Lord returned! We've been longing for the Lord's coming all these years. Now that He's come and is expressing truths for His judgment work, if we accept God's judgment and cleansing, we will be saved and get into God's kingdom. We shouldn't be afraid of being rejected by others, but of being abandoned and eliminated by the Lord, of missing the chance to be raptured when the Lord returns. We'd then be weeping and gnashing our teeth in the great disasters!" Hearing my words, my kids stopped pushing the issue, and I silently gave thanks for God's guidance. Seeing how firm my attitude was, Pastor Li and Co-worker Wang just left in a huff.

Pastor Li came back a few days later to tempt me with a potential marriage. Pastor Li said, "You've just lost your wife, your daughter's married, and your son isn't around much. It must be really hard for you to be all alone. You really should have someone here to cook for you. Sister Wang at church is single, too. She's well-off, well-liked, and enthusiastic in her faith. Wouldn't it be wonderful if the two of you could come together, be there for each other, and serve the Lord together?" Sister Wang called me that evening, and she kept urging me not to believe in Eastern Lightning anymore. She also said that if I was short of money for my son's marriage, I needed only say the word. Hearing this left me feeling really torn. When my wife was sick and bedridden, our daughter got into a car accident while getting medicine for her. It put her in the hospital. Sister Wang came to take care of both my wife and daughter. I'd always been so grateful to her. Would I hurt Sister Wang's feelings if I didn't take her advice? But by going along with her I'd be betraying the Lord. I was really distraught, and

prayed to God over and over again. I struggled with it for a bit, then very delicately turned her down.

One day, Pastor Li came and found me while I was working in the fields. He said, “Brother Zhang, if not for yourself, think of your children. Your son just got engaged, and his fiancée’s entire family believes in the Lord. If they find out that you believe in Almighty God, would they still let her marry into your family? Wouldn’t that be disastrous for your son’s marriage? You should give it some more thought.” At this, I thought, “You’re threatening me with my son’s marriage to keep me from the true way. That’s despicable!” I said in no uncertain terms, “My faith in Almighty God is my own business. It’s got nothing to do with my son’s marriage. Besides, whether his marriage works out is in God’s hands. I’ve determined that Almighty God is the Lord Jesus returned and I’ll follow Him until the end. If my son doesn’t understand now, one day he will.” At first I thought it was all talk on Pastor Li’s part, but shockingly, he was actually using something as important as my son’s marriage to get me to betray Almighty God.

I went to my son’s welding shop a few days later. He furrowed his brows and said, “Dad, my fiancée said Pastor Li went to see her family and told them you believe in Eastern Lightning. She said if you don’t give that up, the wedding is off.” I was aghast and infuriated. Pastor Li really was using my son’s marriage to threaten me. How could a believer in the Lord do something so despicable? Seeing my son so crestfallen, I felt terrible. It was just 18 days before their wedding date. Was it really going to fall through that way? Tears filled my eyes. He went on, “Dad, she also said that she has three conditions for getting married. First is to terminate our father-and-son relationship. Second is to not take care of you in your old age. Third is to cut off all family ties. My mom is no longer with us. Please

stop believing in Eastern Lightning for the sake of our family.” Hearing my son’s words and seeing his face full of pain pierced my heart like a knife. Just because I believed in Almighty God, these clergy members were treating me like an enemy, forcing my son to cut off ties with me. That’s so disgusting! I said to my son, “My child, you’re an adult now and you don’t need me to take care of you. I’m old. I just want to practice my faith and follow God for the rest of my days. I hope you can understand.” At that, I turned around and left the shop. Back at home, I prayed to God, “Almighty God! The pastor is using every trick in the book to hassle me and coerce me. My son is going to cut off all ties with me. I feel so weak right now. Please guide me and give me faith.”

A brother from The Church of Almighty God came by my place the next day and I told him what had been going on. He read a passage of Almighty God’s words for me: **“In every step of work that God does within people, externally it appears to be interactions between people, as if born of human arrangements or from human disturbance. But behind the scenes, every step of work, and everything that happens, is a wager made by Satan before God, and requires people to stand firm in their testimony to God. Take when Job was tried, for example: Behind the scenes, Satan was making a bet with God, and what happened to Job was the deeds of men and the disturbance of men. Behind every step of work that God does in you is Satan’s wager with God—behind it all is a battle. ... Everything people do requires them to pay a certain price in their efforts. Without actual hardship, they cannot satisfy God; they do not even come close to satisfying God, and they are just spouting empty slogans!”** (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. Only Loving God Is Truly Believing in God). After reading God’s words, he fellowshiped a lot with me in the context of this passage. I understood that when we’re

hindered, hassled, and coerced by the clergy, it may look like it's done by people, but in fact, it's Satan trying to use people to disturb us. Wherever God is working, Satan is there interfering. Satan hates God's work to save mankind, so it uses all sorts of tactics and tricks to keep people from following God, to bring people down to hell with it. Pastor Li and the others tried to keep me from the true way, badgering me time after time, saying they'd give me a car, have me manage the church's finances or the retirement home. They also offered to find me a wife. When none of that worked, they used my son's marriage to force me to betray God. It was so sinister and malicious! The brother shared more fellowship, "When the Lord Jesus appeared and worked, the leaders of the Jewish faith extremely hated God. They were well aware the Lord Jesus' preaching was authoritative. Not only did they refuse to look into it, but they madly resisted, condemned, and blasphemed Him. They did everything they could to stop people from following Him and had a hand in His crucifixion. They did this because they were afraid that they'd lose their status and their living if people followed the Lord Jesus. Just as it's written in the Bible: 'Then gathered the chief priests and the Pharisees a council, and said, What do we? For this man does many miracles. If we let Him thus alone, all men will believe on Him: and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation. ... Then from that day forth they took counsel together for to put Him to death' (John 11:47, 48, 53). God has come in the last days to do the work of judgment to cleanse and save mankind. Religious clergy know that Almighty God's words are the truth, but they don't seek or investigate them. They even frantically resist and condemn Him, and stop others from following Him. How is their essence any different from the Pharisees', who opposed the Lord Jesus? The Lord Jesus long ago condemned and cursed those hypocrites. The Lord Jesus said: **'Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees,**

hypocrites! For you shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for you neither go in yourselves, neither suffer you them that are entering to go in’ (Matthew 23:13). ‘Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, you make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves’ (Matthew 23:15). Almighty God’s words also expose the essence and root cause of religious leaders’ opposition to God. Almighty God says: **‘There are those who read the Bible in grand churches and recite it all day long, yet not one among them understands the purpose of God’s work. Not one among them is able to know God; still less can any one among them accord with God’s intentions. They are all worthless, vile people, each standing on high to lecture God. They willfully oppose God even as they carry His banner. Claiming faith in God, still they eat the flesh and drink the blood of man. All such people are devils that devour the soul of man, head demons that deliberately disturb those trying to step onto the right path, and stumbling blocks impeding those who seek God. They may appear of “sound constitution,” but how are their followers to know that they are none other than antichrists who lead people to stand against God? How are their followers to know that they are living devils dedicated to the devouring of human souls?’** (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. All People Who Do Not Know God Are People Who Oppose God).” After hearing the brother’s fellowship and reading God’s words, I better understood religious leaders’ demonic nature of hating the truth and resisting God. They furiously resist and condemn Almighty God and try their hardest to stop believers from accepting God’s work of the last days because they want God’s sheep to be theirs, to keep them firmly under control. They stop believers from doing what they can’t do—getting into God’s kingdom. They resist God and are doomed to go to hell, and even

drag others down with them. They truly are a pack of demons! If it weren't for God incarnate appearing and working in the last days, revealing these evil servants and antichrists hiding out in churches, and without my personal experience of the religious pastor's obstruction and disturbance, I never would have seen their demonic essence of opposing God. I'd have been misled and ruined by them without being any the wiser. I saw their hypocritical, hideous faces clearly and my determination to follow Almighty God grew stronger.

Afterward, I kept sharing the gospel with the brothers and sisters from my old church. When we were in a gathering one morning, Pastor Li and his crew came to my house again, and he said, "We've told you over and over again to give up Eastern Lightning. Not only do you refuse to listen, but you're even stealing my sheep and preaching Eastern Lightning to them. Do you really want to go up against me?" I said, "Pastor Li, it's not right to say that. The church is God's, and the flock is His, too. You're just a pastor. How can you say the sheep are yours? I'm sharing the gospel with brothers and sisters so they can hear God's voice and return before His throne and accept God's salvation. Why would you stand in the way of that? Everyone's feeling weak and negative. They're spiritually parched and in darkness. They're not getting any life sustenance. Almighty God has expressed the truth, giving us the way of eternal life. Why don't you want people to read His words? Why would you strip people of their right and freedom to look into the true way? By keeping them from doing that, aren't you letting them die of thirst and leaving them stranded in religion? Is that being a good servant or an evil servant?" Pastor Li's face changed immediately and he shouted furiously, "I see you're beyond help! If you won't follow us in your faith, just you wait, you'll be punished in hell!" I said, "You don't have any say over whether I go to hell. You don't even

know how to recognize the Lord's voice or welcome Him. How could you lead others to His kingdom? Only Christ of the last days is our gate into the kingdom of heaven. I've found the way of eternal life through following Him. The responsibility for my life lies with God, not you!" They left in dejection after I said that. No one came to bother me again.

I gained some discernment over Satan's tricks after getting through the pastor's obstruction and disturbances. I also saw that the pastors and elders in religion are just hypocritical Pharisees, that they're antichrists who resist God. I was completely freed from their bondages and constraints. Almighty God's words led me every step to triumph over Satan and stand firm in the true way. I truly give thanks to God! Thinking back over everything I went through, it was all a big temptation. I was skirting the edges of life and death. Without the guidance of God's words, I never could have seen through Satan's ploys. If I'd followed the flesh and bowed to Satan, leaving the true way, I would have completely lost my chance at salvation. I really was hanging by a thread! I'm so grateful for God's protection and salvation!

25. Reflections on “Do Not Impose on Others That Which You Yourself Do Not Desire”

By Lydia, South Korea

For some time, I had so many problems cropping up in my duty, both big and small. Some were from being too careless, and some were from not knowing the principles. I was kind of worried, afraid my leader or the sister I worked with would prune me, saying I was perfunctory in my duty, but my partnered sister barely mentioned my problems, just telling me to be more careful in the future. This always made me happy. Later, when I saw some obvious problems others had in their duties, I felt that they were being too perfunctory in their work, and wanted to fellowship with them and dissect their problems so they could understand the nature of being perfunctory and the serious consequences of going on like that. But then I thought that bluntly pointing out other people's issues would wound their pride. It would be better to say just enough to make them aware of their issues and leave it at that. Besides, I'd been having the same problems, so what right did I have to speak up? What if I pruned others for something, and then did it myself later? Wouldn't I be a hypocrite? I figured it was better not to expose or prune them and that I should just say nice things. That way if I did something wrong in the future, the others wouldn't make a fuss. Forgiving others is forgiving yourself. When I thought about it that way, the bit of justice in my heart disappeared. I said to my partnered sister, "There's no need to call out specific people who have problems. We can just refer to the problems." She didn't say anything in response. I felt a little uneasy after that. Would the others realize they had a problem if they weren't singled out? Would they change in the future? If they didn't, that would impact the work. I felt conflicted. I wanted to speak up but didn't

dare, and by not speaking, I felt I wasn't fulfilling my responsibility. Afterward, I wondered why it was so difficult for me. What was keeping me from exposing the problems of other brothers and sisters? I said a silent prayer, asking God to guide me in understanding my issue.

Later, I told another sister about my current state, and she sent me a passage of God's words. Reading it really opened my eyes, and I gained some understanding of my problem. Almighty God says: **"Are you proponents of the saying on moral conduct, 'Do not impose on others that which you yourself do not desire'? If someone were a proponent of this phrase, would you think they were great and noble? There are some who would say, 'Look, they don't impose, they don't make things hard for others, or put them in difficult positions. Aren't they wonderful? They are always strict with themselves yet tolerant of others; they never tell anyone to do something that they wouldn't do themselves. They give others a lot of freedom, and make them feel an abundance of warmth and acceptance. What a great person!' Is that really the case? The implication of the saying 'Do not impose on others that which you yourself do not desire,' is that you should only give or supply to others things that you yourself like and take pleasure in. But what things do corrupted people like and take pleasure in? Corrupted things, preposterous things, and extravagant desires. If you give and supply to people these negative things, will all of humanity not become more and more corrupted? There will be fewer and fewer positive things. Is this not a fact? It is a fact that humanity is deeply corrupted. Corrupted humans like to pursue fame, gain, status, and pleasures of the flesh; they want to be celebrities, to be mighty and superhuman. They want a comfortable life and are averse to hard work; they want everything to be handed to them. Very few of them love the truth or**

positive things. If people give and supply to others their corruption and predilections, what will happen? It is just as you would imagine: Humanity will only become more and more corrupt. Those who are proponents of the idea ‘Do not impose on others that which you yourself do not desire,’ ask that people give and supply to others their corruption, predilections, and extravagant desires, making other people seek evil, comfort, money, and advancement. Is this the right path in life? It is plain to see that ‘Do not impose on others that which you yourself do not desire’ is a very problematic saying. The holes and flaws in it are glaringly obvious; it is not even worth dissecting and discerning it. With the slightest examination, its errors and ridiculousness are plain to see. However, there are many among you who are easily persuaded and influenced by this saying and accept it without discernment. When interacting with others, you often use this saying to admonish yourself and exhort others. By doing this, you think that your character is particularly noble, and that your comportment is very reasonable. But without realizing it, these words have revealed the principle you live by and your stance on issues. At the same time, you have misled and misguided others into approaching people and circumstances with the same view and stance as you. You have acted like a veritable fence-straddler, and completely taken the middle road. You say, ‘No matter what the issue is, there is no need to take it seriously. Don’t make things difficult for yourself or others. If you make things difficult for other people, then you’re making them difficult for yourself. Being kind to others is being kind to yourself. If you’re hard on other people, then you’re being hard on yourself. Why put yourself in a difficult position? Not imposing on others that which you yourself do not desire is the best thing you could do for yourself,

and the most considerate.’ This attitude is obviously one of not being meticulous in anything. You have no correct stance or perspective on any issue; you have a muddled view of everything. You are not meticulous and just turn a blind eye to things. When you finally stand before God and account for yourself, it will be a big muddle. Why is that? Because you always say you should not impose on others that which you yourself don’t desire. This gives you great comfort and enjoyment, but at the same time it will cause you great trouble, making it so that you can’t have a clear view or stance on many matters. Of course, it also makes you unable to understand clearly what God’s requirements and standards for you are when you encounter these situations, or what outcome you should achieve. These things happen because you are not meticulous in anything; they are caused by your muddled attitude and view. Is not imposing on others that which you yourself don’t desire the tolerant attitude you should have toward people and things? No, it is not. It is just a theory which appears right, noble, and kind from the outside, but is actually a thoroughly negative thing. Clearly, even less is it a truth principle that people should be adhering to” (The Word, Vol. 6. On the Pursuit of the Truth I. What It Means to Pursue the Truth (10)). God’s words exposed my attitude toward getting along with others. When I saw an issue in someone’s approach to their duty, I didn’t want to clearly point it out. On the surface it looked like I was being kind, letting others save face, and not embarrassing them, but I had an ulterior motive. Since I was perfunctory in my duty quite often and had similar issues, I was afraid of pointing out others’ problems and later displaying the very same problem. Wouldn’t that make me a hypocrite? I believed that being strict with others would be bad for me by not leaving myself a way out, so I didn’t want to take the problems of others seriously, preferring to

gloss over them. I was well aware that if they were always perfunctory in their duties, not only would they not get good results or have any good deeds, but it would also impact the church's work, even causing major disruptions and disturbances. As a supervisor, I should've been taking responsibility, fellowshiping and pointing out others' issues, and when necessary, exposing, dissecting, and pruning them. But to save face and protect my status, I lost even the slightest will to practice the truth. From the outside, I seemed really considerate, but in reality, I wanted to protect myself and keep others from mentioning my problems. If it hadn't been for the exposure of God's words, I never would have realized that not pointing out others' problems actually stems from being impacted and controlled by satanic philosophies. I never would have seen how deceitful I was.

Later, I read something in God's words: **"In a literal sense, 'Do not impose on others that which you yourself do not desire' means that if you do not like something, or do not like to do something, then you shouldn't force it onto other people either. This seems smart and reasonable, but if you use this satanic philosophy to handle every situation, then you will make many mistakes. It is likely that you will hurt, mislead, or even harm people. Just like how some parents are not fond of studying, but like to make their children study, and always try to reason with them, urging them to study hard. If you were to apply the requirement here to 'not impose on others that which you yourself do not desire,' then these parents shouldn't make their children study, because they themselves do not enjoy it. There are other people who believe in God, but do not pursue the truth; yet in their hearts they know that believing in God is the right path in life. If they see that their children do not believe in God and are not on the right path, they urge them to believe in God. Even though they themselves do not pursue the**

truth, they still want their children to pursue it and be blessed. In this situation, if they adhered to the saying ‘Do not impose on others that which you yourself do not desire,’ then these parents should not make their children believe in God. That would be in line with this satanic philosophy, but it also would have destroyed their children’s chance at salvation. Who is responsible for this outcome? Does the traditional saying on moral conduct of not imposing on others that which you yourself do not desire not harm people? ... Haven’t these examples thoroughly refuted this saying? There is nothing correct about it. For example, some people do not love the truth; they covet the comforts of the flesh, and find ways to slack off when performing their duty. They are not willing to suffer or pay a price. They think that the saying ‘Do not impose on others that which you yourself do not desire’ puts it well, and tell people, ‘You should learn how to enjoy yourselves. You don’t need to properly perform your duty or suffer hardship or pay a price. If you can slack off, then slack off; if you can muddle through something, then muddle through it. Don’t make things so hard on yourselves. Look, I live this way—isn’t it great? My life is just perfect! You’re exhausting yourselves living that way! You should learn from me.’ Does this not meet the requirement of ‘not imposing on others that which you yourself do not desire’? If you act this way, are you a person with conscience and reason? (No.) If a person loses their conscience and reason, are they not lacking virtue? This is called lacking virtue. Why do we call it this? Because they crave comfort, they muddle through their duty, and incite and influence others to join them in being perfunctory and craving comfort. What is the problem with this? Being perfunctory and irresponsible in your duty is an act of trickery and resistance to God. If you continue to be perfunctory and do not repent,

you will be exposed and eliminated” (The Word, Vol. 6. On the Pursuit of the Truth I. What It Means to Pursue the Truth (10)). **“If people have a heart which loves the truth, they will have the strength to pursue the truth, and can work hard at practicing the truth. They can abandon that which should be abandoned, and let go of that which should be let go of. In particular, things that pertain to your own fame, gain, and status should be let go of. If you do not let them go, it means you do not love the truth and do not have the strength to pursue the truth. When things happen to you, you must seek the truth, and practice the truth. If, at those times when you need to practice the truth, you always have a selfish heart and cannot let go of your own self-interest, you will be unable to put the truth into practice. If you never seek or practice the truth in any circumstance, you are not a person who loves the truth. No matter how many years you have believed in God, you will not obtain the truth. Some people are always pursuing fame, gain, and self-interest. Whatever work the church arranges for them, they always deliberate, thinking, ‘Will this benefit me? If it will, I’ll do it; if it won’t, then I won’t.’ A person like this does not practice the truth—so can they perform their duty well? They most certainly cannot. Even if you have not done evil, you are still not a person who practices the truth. If you do not pursue the truth, do not love positive things, and whatever befalls you, you only care about your own reputation and status, your own self-interest, and what is good for you, then you are a person who is only driven by self-interest, and who is selfish and base. ... If people never practice the truth after years of believing in God, they are disbelievers; they are evil people. If you never practice the truth, and if your transgressions grow ever more numerous, then your outcome is set. It is clear to see that all your transgressions, the mistaken path you**

walk, and your refusal to repent all add up to a multitude of evil deeds; and so your outcome is that you will go to hell—you will be punished”

(The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. Part Three). I couldn't help but feel a shock in my heart at what God's words expose. Basing my interactions on the philosophy for worldly dealings of “Do not impose on others that which you yourself do not desire” made me seem understanding and considerate toward others, but in fact, I was doing them harm. I wasn't practicing or entering into God's words or His demands. I was pandering to others over their problems, not asking them to practice God's word and have entry into it, as if they should be just like me, not seeking progress, being negative, and depraved. Doing things that way is irresponsible. It's being a people pleaser. It's unconscionable and lacking in virtue. That's how I was behaving. I didn't love the truth, and was only seeking to put myself at ease. I didn't want to take my duty seriously or be detailed, which led to there being all sorts of issues and deviations in my duty. I was afraid of exposing my faults and shortcomings and I hoped the leader and my partner wouldn't be too strict with me. I was also unwilling to expose people that I saw had the same problem as me, and I was afraid if I was too direct with others, I'd have to set an example and accept their oversight, and would have fewer chances to care for my flesh. So I wanted to shield others and allow them to be like me, not mentioning problems we noticed, and not keeping an eye on each other. Before gaining the truth, people tend to follow their corrupt dispositions in life, slacking off and being perfunctory in their duties. This is when mutual supervision and guidance are needed most. This is a positive thing, and it protects the church's work. As a supervisor, I really should have taken the lead in practicing the truth, but on top of not being a good example, I allowed everyone to be perfunctory and not strive for progress, just like me. Essentially, I was averse to the truth,

and unwilling to accept it. I was taking the lead in being perfunctory and cheating God. Not only was I not doing my duty well, I was also harming my brothers and sisters. The more I reflected on it, the more I saw that it was a more serious issue than I'd thought. To protect my reputation and status, I disregarded the church's work and the brothers' and sisters' life entry. I was so selfish and vile! I also came to understand why God says people like that are disbelievers, that they're evil people who worm their way into God's house. It's because the only thing in their hearts is themselves—they don't think of the church's work. God hopes that all of us can practice the truth, speaking and acting with principle. But I didn't love the truth. I hoped everyone would shield each other, and that no one would practice the truth. I was doing the opposite of what God wanted—this was doing evil! I used to think that only intentionally disrupting and disturbing the church's work was evil doing that would disgust God, but I saw then that protecting my own interests at every turn, speaking and acting based on my corrupt dispositions, and not practicing the truth was also doing evil. Realizing this, I quickly prayed to God in repentance, "God, I'm a supervisor, but I'm not practicing the truth. To protect my reputation and status, I even wanted everyone to shield each other and be perfunctory. I have no conscience or reason, and I don't deserve this duty. God, I want to repent and change." After praying, I listed out all the problems the others had had in their duties lately. I was stunned when I saw the details of all these issues. A couple of people had been irresponsible and perfunctory in their duties, which meant some work had to be redone. Seeing one problem after another made me really upset. I hadn't imagined there would be so many problems in everyone's duties. But I had even thought I could let things slide, indulging others and myself. I had no consideration for God's

intention. If things went on that way, the work would all really be delayed because of me.

One evening I read a passage of God's words that helped me understand my behavior. God's words say: **"No matter what they're doing, antichrists first consider their own interests, and they only act once they've thought it all out; they do not truly, sincerely, and absolutely submit to the truth without compromise, but do so selectively and conditionally. What condition is this? It is that their status and reputation must be safeguarded, and must not suffer any loss. Only after this condition is satisfied will they decide and choose what to do. That is, antichrists give serious consideration to how to treat the truth principles, God's commissions, and the work of God's house, or how to deal with the things they face. They do not consider how to satisfy God's intentions, how to keep from damaging the interests of God's house, how to satisfy God, or how to benefit the brothers and sisters; these are not the things they consider. What do antichrists consider? Whether their own status and reputation will be affected, and whether their prestige will be lowered. If doing something according to the truth principles benefits the work of the church and the brothers and sisters, but would cause their own reputation to suffer and cause many people to realize their true stature and know what sort of nature essence they have, then they will definitely not act in accordance with the truth principles. If doing some real work will cause more people to think highly of them, look up to them and admire them, allow them to gain even greater prestige, or enable their words to carry authority and make more people submit to them, then they will choose to do it that way; otherwise, they will never choose to disregard their own interests out of consideration for the interests of God's house or of**

the brothers and sisters. This is the nature essence of antichrists. Isn't it selfish and despicable? In any situation, antichrists see their status and reputation as of utmost importance. No one can compete with them. No matter the method required, so long as it wins people over and makes others worship them, antichrists will do it. ... In sum, their goal and motive in doing all of this revolves around nothing more than status and reputation. Regardless of whether it's their external language, methods, behavior, or a kind of thought, view, or method of pursuit, these things all revolve around reputation and status. This is the way that antichrists work" (The Word, Vol. 4. Exposing Antichrists. Item Nine (Part Three)).

God's words are crystal clear. Everything antichrists do is to protect their own reputation and status. They never consider how to protect the church's work or what benefits their brothers and sisters. They'd rather see the church's work impacted than endanger their own interests. They care too much about reputation and status. In my reflection, I saw that I acted just like an antichrist. When faced with something, I always put my interests, face, and status above everything. When I saw that some people were being quite perfunctory in their duties, I knew I should point it out, prune them, and fellowship with them so that they could see their problems and recognize their corrupt dispositions. But I didn't want to offend anyone, and I wanted to protect myself, so I didn't practice the truth. I couldn't even get a single word in line with the truth out of my mouth. Instead, I racked my brains to make sure I had a way out. I was really slippery and deceitful, a people pleaser who wanted to take the middle road. I just kept pursuing fame and status, protecting my own interests, allowing others to do their duties based on their corrupt dispositions, and not thinking of the church's work. I was on the path of an antichrist. If I kept on that way, I was sure to be revealed and eliminated by God. This realization showed me how grave

this problem was. I prayed to God, asking Him to guide me so I could let go of fame and status, uphold the church's work, and fulfill my responsibilities.

Afterward, I read another passage of God's words: **"God does not demand that people not impose on others that which they themselves do not desire, instead He asks people to be clear on the principles they should observe when handling different situations. If it is correct and in line with the truth in God's words, then you must cling to it. And not only must you cling to it, you must admonish, persuade, and fellowship with others, so that they understand exactly what God's intentions are, and what the truth principles are. This is your responsibility and obligation. God does not ask you to take the middle road, and even less does He ask you to show off how big your heart is. You should cling to the things God has admonished you for and taught to you, and what God talks about in His words: the requirements, the criteria, and the truth principles that people should be observing. Not only must you cling to them, and hold on to them forever, but you must also practice these truth principles by leading by example, as well as persuading, supervising, helping, and guiding others to cling to, observe, and practice them in the same way you do. God demands that you do this—this is what He entrusts to you. You cannot just make requirements of yourself while ignoring others. God demands that you take the correct stance on issues, cling to the correct criteria, and know precisely what the criteria in God's words are, and that you figure out precisely what the truth principles are. Even if you cannot accomplish this, even if you are unwilling, if you don't like it, if you have notions, or if you resist it, you must treat it as your responsibility, as your obligation. You must fellowship with people on the positive things that come from God, on**

things which are right and correct, and use them to help, impact, and guide others, so that people can benefit from and be edified by them, and walk the correct path in life. This is your responsibility, and you should not stubbornly cling to the idea 'Do not impose on others that which you yourself do not desire' which Satan has put into your mind. In God's eyes, that saying is just a philosophy for worldly dealings; it is a way of thinking that contains Satan's trickery; it is not at all the correct path, nor is it a positive thing. All God requires of you, is for you to be an upright person who understands clearly what they should and should not do. He does not call you to be a people-pleaser or a fence-straddler; He has not called you to take the middle road. When a matter concerns the truth principles, you must say what needs to be said, and understand what needs to be understood. If someone does not understand something but you do, and you can give pointers and help them out, then you absolutely must fulfill this responsibility and obligation. You must not just stand by the wayside and watch, and even less should you cling to the philosophies that Satan has put into your mind such as not imposing on others that which you yourself do not desire. ... The saying on moral conduct 'Do not impose on others that which you yourself do not desire' is really and truly Satan's cunning scheme to control the minds of people. If you always uphold this, then you are someone who lives according to satanic philosophies; a person who completely lives in a satanic disposition. If you do not follow God's way, then you do not love or pursue the truth. No matter what happens, the principle you should follow and the most important thing you must do is help people as much as you can. You should not practice what Satan says, which is to 'not impose on others that which you yourself do not desire,' and be a 'smart' people-pleaser. What does it mean to

help people as much as you can? It means fulfilling your responsibilities and obligations. As soon as you see that something is part of your responsibilities and obligations, you should fellowship on God's words and the truth. This is what it means to fulfill your responsibilities and obligations" (The Word, Vol. 6. On the Pursuit of the Truth I. What It Means to Pursue the Truth (10)). From God's words I saw that "Do not impose on others that which you yourself do not desire" is a tactic, a ploy Satan uses to corrupt people and control their thoughts. When they live by satanic philosophies, there is no longer an atmosphere of practicing the truth in their interactions, and they become tolerant toward and shield each other. If everyone lives by their corrupt disposition, Satan gains control and evil gets the upper hand. Eventually, the Holy Spirit forsakes them. Though I couldn't yet live up to or put into practice God's words and His requirements, I had to fulfill my responsibilities and fellowship with the others on my enlightenment and understanding of God's words. If I saw people going against the truth principles in their duties, instead of displaying an attitude of leniency and tolerance, I had to be principled, helping others by fellowshipping and pointing their issues out. Only then would I be upholding the church's work and fulfilling my responsibility. I also had to lead by example in putting the truth into practice. It was a fact that there were problems in my duty, but I couldn't cut myself any slack, put on an act, or escape reality. If I did, I'd never make any progress. I should proactively acknowledge my issues, accept others' oversight, and take my duty seriously. I also realized that the idea that you have to be free of mistakes and issues to criticize others is not in line with the truth at all. I'm also a corrupt human with a gravely satanic disposition. I often go against the truth principles in my duty, and need to undergo God's judgment and pruning. I need oversight from brothers and sisters, too. I should regard

myself correctly so that if more problems become apparent, I'll need to face them, not keep running from them or disguise myself. Realizing this was enlightening for me, and I found a path for practice.

In a gathering, I first addressed the issues I'd had recently in my duty, exposing and dissecting my perfunctoriness, and asked everyone to keep an eye on me. I also told them to let it serve as a warning. Finally, I also singled out two of the brothers and sisters who had been particularly perfunctory and fellowshiped on the consequences of failing to change. I felt really at ease after doing that. It was really moving for me when a brother I'd pruned recognized his problem because he was singled out like that, and sent me a message saying, "If I hadn't been exposed and pruned like that, I would have been totally unaware of my issue. Thank you for helping me this way. Now I want to really reflect and enter into the truth." I was greatly touched by this message. I used to hate being pruned and exposed, so I wanted to do that to others even less, but in fact, that wasn't doing them any favors. I deeply regretted that, to protect my own reputation and status, I had always indulged and tolerated everyone's problems in their duties, and had not fulfilled my duty or responsibilities. I really owed God, and the brothers and sisters. I realized that only God's words are the principle by which we should act and comport ourselves. Being able to point out problems in others without mincing words is helpful for them—it also benefits ourselves. But "Do not impose on others that which you yourself do not desire" is actually a satanic fallacy that hurts people and ourselves. I also saw that always fearing being pruned when problems cropped up in my duty, and being unwilling to expose and prune others for their problems, meant that I didn't understand the significance of pruning. God's words say: **"Supervising people, observing them, trying to understand them—this is all in order to help them enter the right track**

of faith in God, to enable them to do their duty as God asks and according to principle, to stop them from causing any disturbances or disruptions, and to stop them from doing futile work. The aim of doing this is entirely about showing responsibility toward them and toward the work of God's house; there is no malice to it" (The Word, Vol. 5. The Responsibilities of Leaders and Workers. The Responsibilities of Leaders and Workers (7)). It's true. We all have corrupt dispositions and we're all liable to be perfunctory and slippery in our duty. If there's no one to supervise and inspect our work, or offer fellowship and advice and prune us for our problems, we can't possibly do a good job. We'll just pander to our flesh and crave comfort, or even wantonly do something disruptive to the church's work. So, when leaders supervise work or prune us, they're being responsible in their duty, and it's to uphold the church's work. It's also good for our life entry, not to make things hard on us. But I was a supervisor following the satanic philosophy of "Do not impose on others that which you yourself do not desire." I saw issues in others' duties but was still nice to everyone. I didn't fellowship with, help, or prune anyone, but indulged and shielded them. It was irresponsible, not to mention harmful to others and the church. This experience turned around this fallacious idea of mine and made me see the significance of supervision, criticism, pruning and exposure.

This experience was really moving for me. I saw that when we live by satanic philosophies, all of our ideas are distorted. We can't distinguish between positive things and negative things, and we don't know what is in line with the truth principles and God's requirements. It's easy to follow satanic philosophies and do things that disrupt and disturb the church's work. Only looking at things and living according to God's words is in line with His intention. I also got a taste of the sweetness of practicing the truth

and gained the confidence to focus on doing what God demands in the future. Thank God!

26. Reflections After Becoming Sick During the Pandemic

By Monique, USA

Soon after accepting Almighty God's gospel of the last days, I learned from God's words that when God is finishing His work of the last days, great disasters will come upon mankind to reward the good and punish the evil. Those who did evil and opposed God will be destroyed in the disasters, while those who accepted the judgment of God's words and were cleansed will be protected by God and survive. They will be brought by Him into His kingdom to enjoy eternal blessings. I thought at the time that getting into the kingdom and gaining eternal life would be a great blessing. I knew I had to treasure this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, do my duty well, and work hard for God so that when God's work ends I'd be qualified to remain. So, I quit my job and started my duty to preach the gospel. At this critical time, with disasters growing ever greater, I had to get more good deeds done and share God's gospel of the last days with even more people. In that way I could make a contribution to spreading the kingdom gospel. So, I threw all my energy into sharing the gospel, and was busy from early till late every day. More and more people were accepting God's work of the last days in my district, and churches were established one after another. Seeing these results left me feeling very pleased with myself. I felt like my contributions to the gospel work couldn't go unnoticed. When the pandemic broke out, with infection numbers rising all around the world, I felt totally calm. I thought that since I expended myself for God in my duty, the pandemic wouldn't affect me, no matter how widespread it became. However, getting suddenly infected with the virus compelled me to reflect on the motives and impurities underlying the performance of my duty over the years.

One day in May 2021 I suddenly began coughing, then developed a fever and felt weak all over. At first I thought I'd gotten a cold and didn't really care, but the symptoms persisted for a week without going away. A sister noticed my symptoms were really similar to Covid and was concerned I'd gotten it, so she suggested I go to the hospital for a check-up. I didn't pay it much mind, and thought, "I've worked long days, suffering and sacrificing for my duty, and have done pretty well. Also, I haven't done evil and disrupted the church's work. So how could I get infected?" But the test came back positive, which I hadn't expected at all. I walked along the road home in a daze, unable to make sense of it. "I've been doing my duties for years," I thought, "so how could I catch Covid? What will the brothers and sisters think of me if they find out? Will they assume I'm being punished for doing something that offended God? But then, I haven't done evil and disrupted the church's work." Millions of people around the world had died since the previous year, when the pandemic broke out, so was I going to die too, now that I was infected? Wouldn't my sacrifice and expenditure of the last few years come to nothing if I died when God's work was about to conclude? It would leave me with no part in the blessings of the future kingdom. The more I thought about this the worse I felt. How would I ever get through this situation? I prayed, calling out to God, "God, You have, by Your good intention, allowed me to catch this illness. You never do wrong, so is it that I rebelled against and opposed You in some way? It is no accident that I have been infected, and it all comes under Your sovereignty and arrangements, so I wish to seek Your intention and self-reflect. But what I don't know is how I offended Your disposition. Please enlighten and guide me to know where I went wrong. I'm ready to repent." I thought of a passage of God's words after that: **"How should you experience sickness when it comes? You should come before God and pray, seek and grope**

for God's intention; you should examine yourself to find what it is you have done that went against the truth, and what corruption in you has not been resolved. Your corrupt disposition cannot be resolved without undergoing suffering. Only in being tempered by suffering can people not be dissolute, and able to live before God at all times. When someone suffers, they are always at prayer. They have no thought for the pleasures of food, dress, and other enjoyments; they pray constantly in their hearts, examining themselves to see whether they have done anything wrong or where they may have gone against the truth. Normally, when you face a serious illness or strange malady that makes you suffer very badly, this does not happen by chance. Whether you are ill or in good health, God's intention is there in that" (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. In Believing in God, Gaining the Truth Is Most Crucial). The timely enlightenment of God's words showed me that my infection wasn't random, and that it was entirely down to God's sovereignty and arrangements. I had to seek God's intention and reflect on myself properly. I couldn't complain and blame God no matter what. While quarantined at home over the next few days, I opened up to the brothers and sisters about any corruption I had revealed. I dissected my corruptions and knew myself, and sought a path for practice and entry in God's words. Also, no matter how I felt physically, I kept doing my duty by preaching the gospel online. After a couple of days, I felt much better. I was hardly coughing anymore, my temperature was normal, and my energy and strength had recovered. I was really happy about this, and felt that God had looked after and protected me on seeing my obedience and repentance. My anxiety eased at the thought.

But the next day I suddenly felt tightness and discomfort in my chest and couldn't stop coughing. Then I got a fever and went weak all over. I felt

a wave of panic. Ever since being diagnosed, I hadn't blamed God and had kept on doing my duty. How could I have gotten even sicker? There was no medicine for curing Covid, so if God didn't save me, I was sure to die. The thought of death was really scary—I couldn't resign myself to it. I thought about how I'd followed God for more than 10 years, leaving my home and job behind and working long days on my duty. I'd suffered plenty and paid quite a price. Would none of that be remembered by God? If I died, I'd never see the beauty of the kingdom or enjoy the blessings of the kingdom of heaven. The more I thought about it, the more negative I became. I was still doing my duty, but I didn't have any inner drive, and I got really annoyed when extra work came up. I'd just rush through it so I could get some rest. Before, I used to work on my duty from morning till night, and I thought God would protect me, but now that God wasn't doing that, I had to think of my own well-being and take care of my health. Getting too stressed and tired wouldn't help my recovery. In gatherings, the other brothers and sisters had so much vigor when they spoke. But as for me, I started coughing whenever I spoke, and I couldn't catch my breath after reading a few lines of God's words. I felt really upset and couldn't help but try to reason things out, "I'm usually really diligent in my duty, and I'm serious and responsible. Some of the others don't match up to me in their duties. Everyone else is healthy and doing their duty, so why am I the one with the virus? If this is a trial from God, then how come the same hasn't happened to others in the church who pursue the truth even more than I do? And if this is a punishment from God, then why so, when I haven't done evil or disrupted the church's work, or offended His disposition? God, I still want to do my duty. I like it, and I haven't had my fill of it. I want to keep on living and doing a good job in my duty. God, I'm doing an important duty now and I can still labor for You. Please protect me so that I can go on

living and laboring for You....” When I thought about it that way, a passage of God’s words came to mind very clearly: **“Upon what basis do you—a created being—make demands of God? People are not qualified to make demands of God. There is nothing more unreasonable than making demands of God. He will do what He ought to do, and His disposition is righteous. Righteousness is by no means fairness or reasonableness; it is not egalitarianism, or a matter of allocating to you what you deserve in accordance with how much work you have completed, or paying you for whatever work you have done, or giving you your due according to what effort you expend. This is not righteousness, it is merely being fair and reasonable. Very few people are capable of knowing God’s righteous disposition. Suppose God had eliminated Job after Job bore witness for Him: Would this be righteous? In fact, it would be. Why is this called righteousness? How do people view righteousness? If something is in line with people’s notions, it is then very easy for them to say that God is righteous; however, if they do not see that thing as being in line with their notions—if it is something that they are incapable of comprehending—then it would be difficult for them to say that God is righteous. If God had destroyed Job back then, people would not have said He was righteous. Actually, though, whether people have been corrupted or not, and whether they have been profoundly corrupted or not, does God have to justify Himself when He destroys them? Should He have to explain to people upon what basis it is that He does so? Must God tell people the rules He has ordained? There is no need. In God’s eyes, someone who is corrupt, and who is liable to oppose God, is without any worth; however God handles them will be appropriate, and all are the arrangements of God. If you were displeasing to God’s eyes, and if He**

said that He had no use for you after your testimony and therefore destroyed you, would this, too, be His righteousness? It would. ... Everything that God does is righteous. Though humans may not be able to perceive God's righteousness, they should not make judgments at will. If something He does appears to humans as unreasonable, or if they have any notions about it, and that leads them to say that He is not righteous, then they are being most unreasonable" (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. Part Three). Pondering God's words, I felt like He was calling me to account face to face. Hadn't I just now blamed God for being unfair and unrighteous? And wasn't that a case of bargaining with God, trying to justify myself and negotiate conditions? I felt I'd accomplished some things during my years of suffering and paying the price in my duty, so God should protect me from disaster. That would be His righteousness. But in fact that was all my notions and imaginings, and not at all in line with the truth. God is the Lord of creation and I am a created being. Everything I enjoy comes from God, and my life was also given by God. How God arranges my fate and how long He lets me live is all up to Him. As a created being, I should submit and accept that. Who was I to be arguing with God and trying to set terms? I'd had faith all those years and enjoyed so much of the watering and sustenance of the truth from God, but still had no gratitude. Now that I'd gotten the virus and faced the threat of death, I was arguing my case with God, resisting and blaming Him for unrighteousness. Where was my conscience and reason? As I thought about this I felt more guilty and ashamed, and knelt before God in prayer. "God, I'm so unreasonable! I was created by You; I'm a created being. I should submit to all Your orchestrations and arrangements. That is perfectly natural and justified. You've allowed that I catch this potentially lethal virus. I didn't want to submit, and I argued with You, blaming You for not

doing the right thing and asking You to let me go on living. I was completely without reason. I was so rebellious! God, I want to reflect on myself properly and repent to You.”

Over the next few days, I felt deeply reproached whenever I thought about my complaints and my misunderstanding of God. Especially thinking of how, when my condition got more serious, I argued with God, got negative, slacked off, became perfunctory in my duty and dragged my feet, I felt even more guilty and uneasy. When I wasn’t sick and there was no crisis, I was proclaiming God’s righteousness and saying that created beings had to submit to the Creator’s orchestrations and arrangements. Why did I reveal so much rebelliousness and resistance when I got sick? I read the following in God’s words during my devotionals: **“Man’s relationship with God is merely one of naked self-interest. It is a relationship between a receiver and a giver of blessings. To put it plainly, it is the relationship between an employee and an employer. The employee works hard only to receive the rewards bestowed by the employer. There is no affection in such an interests-based relationship, only transaction. There is no loving or being loved, only charity and mercy. There is no understanding, only helpless suppressed indignation and deception. There is no intimacy, only an uncrossable chasm”** (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. Appendix 3: Man Can Only Be Saved Amidst God’s Management). **“In the minds of antichrists, as long as someone is able to do a duty, pay a price, and suffer some hardship, they ought to be blessed by God. And so, after doing church work for a while, they start taking stock of the jobs they have done for the church, the contributions they have made to God’s house, and what they have done for the brothers and sisters. They keep all of this firmly in their minds, waiting to see what graces and blessings it will earn them from God, so that they**

might determine whether what they are doing is worth it. Why do they always preoccupy themselves with such things? What is it that they are pursuing in the depths of their hearts? What is the aim of their faith in God? From the start, their belief in God has been about obtaining blessings. And no matter how many years they listen to sermons, no matter how many words of God they eat and drink, no matter how many doctrines they understand, they will never let go of their desire and intention to be blessed. If you ask them to be a dutiful created being and accept God's sovereignty and arrangements, they will say, 'That has nothing to do with me. It is not what I should be striving for. What I should strive for is: when I have fought the fight, when I have made the requisite effort and suffered the requisite hardship—once I have done this according to what god requires—god should reward me and allow me to remain, and to be crowned in the kingdom, and to hold a higher position than the people of god. I should be in charge of two or three cities, at the least.' This is what the antichrists care about most. No matter how the house of God fellowships the truth, their intention and desire to obtain blessings cannot be dispelled; they are the same sort of person as Paul. Does such a naked transaction not harbor a sort of wicked and vicious disposition? Some religious people say, 'Our generation follows god on the path of the cross. God chose us, so we are entitled to be blessed. We have suffered and paid a price, and we have drunk from the bitter cup. Some of us have even been arrested and sentenced to jail time. After suffering all this hardship, hearing so many sermons, and learning so much about the Bible, if one day we are not blessed, we will go to the third heaven and argue with god.' Have you ever heard anything like this? They say they will go to the third heaven to argue with God—how bold is that? Doesn't just hearing it

make you fearful? Who dares to try and argue with God? ... Aren't such people archangels? Aren't they Satans? You can argue with anyone but not with God. You shouldn't do such a thing, or even think of doing it. Blessings come from God: He gives them to whomever He wishes to. Even if you meet the conditions for receiving blessings and God doesn't grant them to you, you still shouldn't argue with God. The entire universe and all of mankind are under God's rule; God calls the shots. How can you, a tiny human being, dare to argue with God? How can you overestimate your abilities so much? Why don't you take a look in the mirror to see who you are? By daring to clamor against and contend with the Creator in this way, aren't you courting death? 'If one day we are not blessed, we will go to the third heaven and argue with god' is a statement that openly clamors against God. What kind of place is the third heaven? It's where God resides. Daring to go to the third heaven to argue with God is tantamount to trying to 'overthrow' God! Isn't this the case? Some might ask, 'What does this have to do with antichrists?' It has a lot to do with them, because all those who want to go to the third heaven to argue with God are antichrists. Only antichrists can say such things. Words like these are the voice that antichrists harbor deep within their hearts. This is their wickedness"

(The Word, Vol. 4. Exposing Antichrists. Item Seven: They Are Wicked, Insidious, and Deceitful (Part Two)). I was shamed before the revelation of God's words and saw that my years of suffering and sacrifice in the performance of my duty weren't about being considerate of God's intentions and doing a created being's duty to repay God's love. It was all about getting into the kingdom and enjoying eternal blessings. I treated doing duty as a way to escape disaster, as a bargaining chip and capital in a deal with God. That's why I was always reckoning up how much work I'd done, how many people I'd

converted, and how much I'd suffered and sacrificed. I felt that the more these came to, the more merit I'd earned and the more I qualified for being protected by God and surviving the disaster. On unexpectedly falling ill with Covid, however, I blamed and misunderstood God, without seeking how to submit to Him. Instead, I thought about how to behave well to win God's favor, so that He would protect me and I would quickly recover. When I saw my condition deteriorate, I despaired of God. I blamed Him for being unfair and not protecting me. Evidently, my faith and duty were simply for the purpose of being blessed. I was only using God to achieve my own goal of gaining blessings, like doing a deal with God and trying to cheat Him. How selfish and deceitful I was! I thought about Paul, in the Age of Grace, crisscrossing Europe to preach the gospel. He suffered and sacrificed plenty, but everything he expended was for getting into the kingdom of heaven and being rewarded. In the end, he said, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: From now on there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness" (2 Timothy 4:7-8). What that really meant was that if God didn't bestow a crown on him, then God wasn't righteous. People in the religious world are deeply influenced by these words from Paul. Those who work and suffer in the name of the Lord all do it to go to heaven and be blessed. If not blessed, they argue their case with God. And I was just like them, wasn't I? Then I felt afraid. I never imagined that I, like an antichrist, would argue with God and defy Him if I wasn't blessed. Were it not for the revelation of the facts, I wouldn't have realized that I had such a serious antichrist disposition. I thought of some of God's words: **"I have held man to a strict standard throughout. If your loyalty comes with intentions and conditions, then I would rather be without your so-called loyalty, for I abhor those who deceive Me through their intentions and extort Me with conditions. I wish only for**

man to be absolutely loyal to Me, and to do all things for the sake of—and in order to prove—one word: faith. I despise your use of blandishments to try to make Me rejoice, for I have always treated you with sincerity, and so wish for you to also act with true faith toward Me” (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. Are You a True Believer in God?). I could feel from God’s words that His disposition is righteous, holy, and tolerates no offense. God works to save mankind, and what He wants is man’s sincerity and loyalty. If people’s giving and expending of themselves contain hidden motives and impurities, and include bargaining and cheating, then they will not have God’s approval and in fact will nauseate and disgust God, and be condemned by Him. Just like Paul, far from being blessed by God, he was ultimately severely punished in hell. Mustn’t God also have been nauseated and disgusted by the transactional, adulterated way that I did my duty? Today, getting sick had exposed the despicable intentions underlying my faith and made me see God’s righteousness and holiness. At that, I fully accepted and submitted to having contracted the illness, from my heart.

I read another passage of God’s words later on: **“As a created being, when one comes before the Creator, they ought to perform their duty. This is a very proper thing to do, and they should fulfill this responsibility. On the basis that created beings perform their duties, the Creator has done even greater work among humankind, and He has carried out a further stage of work on people. And what work is that? He provides humankind with the truth, allowing them to gain the truth from Him as they perform their duties and thereby to cast off their corrupt dispositions and be purified. Thus, they come to satisfy God’s intentions and embark on the right path in life, and, ultimately, they are able to fear God and shun evil, attain complete salvation, and**

no longer be subjected to Satan's afflictions. This is the effect that God would have humankind achieve in the end by performing their duties. Therefore, during the process of performing your duty, God does not merely make you see one thing clearly and understand a little truth, nor does He merely let you enjoy the grace and blessings you receive by performing your duty as a created being. Rather, He allows you to be purified and saved, and, ultimately, come to live in the light of the face of the Creator" (The Word, Vol. 4. Exposing Antichrists. Item Nine (Part Seven)).

God's words really moved me. For a created being, doing a duty is a responsibility and obligation that cannot be shirked. More than that, it is a path to gain the truth and achieve dispositional change. In the course of our duties, God sets up all sorts of situations to expose people's corrupt dispositions. Then, through the judgment and revelations of His words, and through His pruning and discipline, He allows us to understand our corrupt disposition and make a change, to no longer be subject to Satan's corruption and afflictions. This is God's earnest intention. Over the years of doing my duty, I'd revealed lots of corruption in the circumstances set up by God. I'd gained some understanding of my corrupt dispositions. Then I'd started hating myself and had repented and changed, living some human semblance. I'd gained so much through my duty, but still I wasn't grateful. Instead, I used the performance of my duty as a bargaining chip and capital to escape disaster, and treated God like He was to be cheated and exploited. How despicable! God has expressed so many truths, but instead of treasuring them I thought only about how to be blessed, escape disaster, get into the kingdom of heaven and be rewarded. I was so vile! I prayed and swore to God that I wouldn't do my duty only for the sake of being blessed, and that I would pursue the truth diligently in my duty to repay God's love. I read another passage of God's words that gave me a path of practice.

God's words say: "If, in your faith in God and pursuit of the truth, you are able to say, 'Whatever sickness or disagreeable event God allows to befall me—no matter what God does—I must submit, and stay in my place as a created being. Before all else, I must put this aspect of the truth—submission—into practice, I must implement it, and live out the reality of submission to God. Moreover, I must not cast aside what God has commissioned to me and the duty I should perform. Even on my last breath, I must hold fast to my duty,' is this not bearing testimony? When you have this kind of resolve and this kind of state, are you still able to complain about God? No, you are not. At such a time, you will think to yourself, 'God gives me this breath, He has provided for and protected me all these years, He has taken much pain from me, given me much grace, and many truths. I have understood truths and mysteries that people have not understood for generations. I have gained so much from God, so I must repay God! Before, my stature was too small, I understood nothing, and everything I did was hurtful to God. I may not have another chance to repay God in the future. No matter how much time I have left to live, I must offer the little strength I have and do what I can for God, so that God can see that all these years of providing for me have not been in vain, but have borne fruit. Let me bring comfort to God, and no longer hurt or disappoint Him.' How about thinking this way? Do not think about how to save yourself or escape, thinking, 'When will this illness be cured? When it is, I shall do my best to perform my duty and be loyal. How can I be loyal when I'm ill? How can I perform the duty of a created being?' As long as you have a single breath, are you not capable of performing your duty? As long as you have a single breath, are you capable of not bringing shame upon God? As long as you have a single breath, as long as your mind is

lucid, are you capable of not complaining about God? (Yes.) It is easy to say ‘Yes’ now, but it will not be so easy when this really happens to you. And so, you must pursue the truth, often work hard on the truth, and spend more time thinking, ‘How can I satisfy God’s intentions? How can I repay God’s love? How can I perform the duty of a created being?’ What is a created being? Is the responsibility of a created being merely to listen to the words of God? No—it is to live out the words of God. God has given you so much truth, so much of the way, and so much life, so that you may live out these things, and bear testimony to Him. This is what ought to be done by a created being, and it is your responsibility and obligation” (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. Only in the Frequent Reading of God’s Words and Contemplation of the Truth Is There a Way Ahead). God’s words are so moving for me. God is the Lord of creation and I am a created being, so my fate is in His hands. He allowed the illness to come upon me, so whether I lived or died, I should submit to God’s sovereignty and arrangements. That’s the basic sense that a created being should possess. And a duty is something a created being should hold to. At any time, no matter what happens, so long as there’s breath in my body, I should hold to my duty. I’d enjoyed so much of God’s love over the years, but I was always rebelling against Him and hurting Him since I didn’t pursue the truth. I was deeply in God’s debt. As long as I was alive, I should do my duty well to repay God’s love. In the days that followed, I pondered every day about how to do my duty well to satisfy God. The sister I was partnered with was new to preaching the gospel and didn’t know many of the principles, so problems kept cropping up. I was online helping and guiding her. I also often quieted myself before God, reading His words and singing hymns to praise Him. I still kept coughing and had a fever, but I was no longer constrained by sickness, and I stopped thinking about

whether I would die. I knew my life was in God's hands and that God's sovereignty would determine how long I lived. Every day that God gives me is a day when I pursue to do my duty well and repay God's love. When the day comes that God allows death to take me, I will submit and voice no complaint.

One evening I couldn't stop coughing and my throat was full of phlegm. I had a high fever and my body felt sore all over. I tossed and turned in bed, feeling terrible and unable to sleep. I wondered, "Am I about to die? Will I ever wake again after I go to sleep?" The idea of death was really upsetting, and I couldn't stop crying at the thought that I might never again get the chance to read God's words. I got up, turned on my computer, and read this passage of God's words: **"Everyone's lifespan has been predetermined by God. An illness may appear to be terminal from a medical standpoint, but from God's point of view, if your life must still go on and your time has yet to come, then you couldn't die even if you wanted to. If God has given you a commission, and your mission is not over, then you will not even die from an illness that is supposed to be fatal—God will not take you yet. Even if you do not pray and seek the truth, or do not attend to treating your illness, or even if you put off your treatment, you will not die. This is particularly true for those who have received a commission from God: When their mission has yet to be completed, no matter what illness befalls them, they must not die straight away; they must live until the final moment of the mission's completion. Do you have this faith? ... The fact is that no matter whether your bargaining is meant to get your illness cured and keep you from dying, or whether you have some other intent or goal in it, from God's point of view, if you can do your duty and are still of use, if God has decided that you are to be used, then you will not die. You will**

not be able to die even if you want to. But if you make trouble, and commit all manner of evil deeds, and aggravate God's disposition, you will die swiftly; your life will be cut short. Everyone's lifespan was determined by God before the creation of the world. If they can obey the arrangements and orchestrations of God, then regardless of whether they suffer illness or not, and whether they are in good or poor health, they will live the number of years predetermined by God. Do you have this faith?" (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. Part Three).

Reading God's words, I could feel His love and mercy. This warmed my heart. I understood God's intention a little better. That I could be born into the last days, believe in God and do a duty was all determined by God. Whether sick or not, I'd have to die if God ordained that my days were done. And if God ordained otherwise, then I wouldn't die even with a fatal illness. I didn't know what was waiting for me, but I should put my life in God's hands and follow His orchestrations and arrangements. Thinking that I could die at any time, I really wanted to speak from the heart to God again. I knelt down and prayed to God, "Oh God! Thank You for letting me hear Your voice and obtain watering and sustenance from so much that You have said, and for allowing me to comprehend the truth and learn properly to conduct myself. I feel my life hasn't been in vain. This is all through Your mercy and salvation! It's just that I'm so deeply corrupted, and I'm always rebelling against and hurting You. I haven't pursued the truth well or genuinely done my duty to repay Your love. I've also never given You a shred of comfort. I am deeply in Your debt. I don't know if I'll have another chance to repay Your love. If I do live, I want to really pursue the truth and do my duty well to satisfy You...." That night, I fell asleep before I knew it. As soon as I woke up the next day, I felt totally relaxed, as if I'd never even gotten sick. My throat felt fine and all the phlegm had gone. I rushed to take

my temperature and found it was back to normal. I was really moved by this, and I knew it was God's mercy and protection. Although I revealed a lot of rebelliousness and resistance when I got Covid, God still watched over and protected me. I couldn't hold back my tears, and offered up my thanks and praise to God.

Two months passed, with my temperature staying normal throughout. The sickness didn't recur, and before I knew it I'd completely recovered. Thinking of how I survived while so many others died in the pandemic, I knew it was all thanks to God's wondrous care and salvation for me. Catching Covid laid bare the hidden intentions and impurities in my faith and duty, allowing me to see my vile motives for trying to do a deal with God in return for blessings. Through this, I gained some understanding of myself and was disgusted with myself. Also, I gained some real experience and understanding of God's holy, righteous disposition, and a sense of submission to God's sovereignty and arrangements. While I underwent refinement and pain through the experience of getting sick, I also gained so much—things that I couldn't have gained from a less taxing situation. Whenever I think back on what I reaped from this experience, I'm filled with gratitude and praise toward God. I give thanks to God for His salvation!

27. The Reason I Didn't Accept Supervision

By Parfait, Benin

I had been watering newcomers in the church for over a year. In the course of my duty, I gradually mastered some principles, and my watering of newcomers also improved. I felt that I had some experience in doing this duty, and that even without help, I could water newcomers well. When the newcomers had problems and difficulties, I could help resolve them by seeking the truth, so I thought that I already knew how to do my duty well. I felt that I didn't need anyone to guide me, and there was no need for others to supervise and follow up on my work. Thus, I didn't accept the supervision and advice of my brothers and sisters, and I didn't give much feedback on the specific situation of the newcomers I watered. I just did my work on my own terms.

One day, the supervisor, Pheolie, asked me about some newcomers, as well as asked me some detailed questions. For example, how did I notify the newcomers about gatherings? Why did this sister or that brother not attend gatherings? Did I often talk with the newcomers to understand their states or difficulties? When I heard these questions, I was very resistant. I thought, "Does she think I'm doing my duty irresponsibly? Does she not trust me?" I was very defiant, and wanted to ignore her. She asked me if the newcomers were interested in coming to gatherings, I perfunctorily said "yes" and didn't explain a single detail. She asked me how I notified the newcomers about gatherings, and I told her I sent them text messages, but I didn't explain details of how I notified them, what difficulties they faced, and so on. She then asked me what aspects of the truth I fellowshiped on with the newcomers, and I said impatiently that I knew how to talk with the newcomers, but I gave no details on what I said, how they responded, or

what problems they had. She was not satisfied with my answer, and she wanted to know more about whether I was supporting and helping these newcomers. I thought she was underestimating me, as if I didn't know how to do my duty, and this made me very uncomfortable. Once, she realized that I didn't consider the newcomers' feelings when I spoke, so she said to me, "You have to think from the perspective of the newcomers. If you were a newcomer, would you be happy with these words? Would you want to reply to them?" Her words rankled me. I said I understood, but I didn't actually accept it. I didn't think there was a problem with the way I spoke to the newcomers. I thought I knew how to fellowship with these newcomers, so I decided that I would still do it my way. Another time, she asked me how I usually fellowshipped with the newcomers, and I said, "by sending messages." She suggested that I call the newcomers if they were available, saying that calls were more direct, and made it easier to understand their issues and help them. But I didn't accept it, and I thought my method was better. I didn't want to listen to her or talk anymore, so I just answered her questions briefly and most of the time I stayed silent. I found that if anyone wanted to discuss things with me about my watering of newcomers, I would become very passive and troubled, because I felt that they were laughing at me, belittling me, and thought I was someone who didn't know how to do my duty or was untrustworthy. I thought I was doing my duty well, that I knew how to water newcomers, that I had my own methods, and that I was more gifted than the supervisor, so I couldn't take her advice. Even though I verbally agreed, I rarely practiced according to her advice, and I continued to water and talk with newcomers on my own terms.

During one gathering, I read God's words and finally gained some understanding of myself. God says: **"There are some people who often violate principles when they act. They do not accept pruning, they**

know in their hearts that the things others say are in line with the truth, but they do not accept them. Such people are so arrogant and self-righteous! Why say they are arrogant? If they do not accept pruning, then they are not obedient, and is disobedience not arrogance? They think they are doing well, they do not think they make mistakes, which means that they do not know themselves, which is arrogance”

(The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. An Arrogant Nature Is at the Root of Man's Resistance to God). **“Let no person think of themselves as perfect, distinguished, noble, or distinct from others; all this is brought about by man's arrogant disposition and ignorance. Always thinking of oneself as set apart—this is caused by an arrogant disposition; never being able to accept their shortcomings, and never being able to confront their mistakes and failures—this is caused by an arrogant disposition; never permitting others to be higher than themselves, or to be better than themselves—this is caused by an arrogant disposition; never allowing others' strengths to surpass or exceed their own—this is caused by an arrogant disposition; never permitting others to have better thoughts, suggestions, and views than themselves, and, when they discover that others are better than themselves, becoming negative, not wishing to speak, feeling distressed and dejected, and becoming upset—all of this is caused by an arrogant disposition. An arrogant disposition can make you protective of your reputation, unable to accept others' corrections, unable to confront your shortcomings, and unable to accept your own failures and mistakes. More than that, when someone is better than you, it can cause hatred and jealousy to emerge in your heart, and you can feel constrained, such that you do not wish to do your duty and become perfunctory in performing it. An arrogant disposition can cause these behaviors and**

practices to emerge in you. If you are able, little by little, to dig deeper into all these details, achieve breakthroughs, and gain an understanding of them; and if you are then able gradually to rebel against these thoughts, to rebel against these erroneous notions, views and even behaviors, and are not constrained by them; and if, in performing your duty, you are able to find the right station for you, and act according to principles, and perform the duty you can and should perform; then, over time, you will be able to perform your duties better. This constitutes entry into the truth reality. If you can enter into the truth reality, you will appear to have a human likeness, and people will say, ‘This person conducts themselves according to their station, and they are doing their duty in a grounded way. They do not rely on naturalness, on hot-headedness, or on their corrupt, satanic disposition to do their duty. They act with restraint, they have a God-fearing heart, they have love for the truth, and their behavior and expressions reveal that they have rebelled against their own flesh and preferences.’ How wonderful it is to conduct oneself in such a way! On occasions when others bring up your shortcomings, you are not only able to accept them, but are optimistic, facing your shortcomings and flaws with poise. Your state of mind is quite normal, free of extremes, free of hot-headedness. Is this not what it is to have a human likeness? **Only such people have reason”** (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. The Principles That Should Guide One’s Conduct). In the past, I thought I wasn’t arrogant, but through the exposure of God’s words, I saw that I was very arrogant. The supervisor told me some good ways to water newcomers, yet I didn’t accept it at all. When she asked me about how I watered the newcomers, I just stayed silent or answered briefly, because I didn’t want to lose face or for others to see my inadequacies in watering newcomers. I

wanted others to see that everything was fine with me, there was nothing wrong in my duty, and I could perform my duty well without the supervision or help of others. I really was too arrogant. I also felt I was more gifted than the sister who oversaw my work, that I knew how to water newcomers, that I had my own methods, and that they worked well, so I wasn't willing to accept her suggestions. I even believed that if I accepted her advice, it meant my work ability was inferior to hers. That would be embarrassing. What would others think of me? So, I outwardly agreed to her suggestions, but I seldom practiced them. My arrogant disposition made me cling to my own views and stopped me from accepting the truth. This was rebellion against God. After that, I calmed down and thought about my sister's suggestion. I thought she had a good point, and it was worth trying. So, I called the newcomers on the phone. I found that it was easier understand their problems, and promptly help them by communicating with them on the phone. When I put her advice into practice, my work became more effective, and I felt very ashamed. In this matter, I saw that although I was somewhat gifted, I still had many shortcomings. Without the help and guidance of my sister, the results of my work would not have improved. I also realized that I was no better than others, and that I couldn't do my duty well by myself.

One day, the supervisor asked me about why a newcomer hadn't come to gatherings for several days. After I explained, she asked me some other questions, wanting to know more details about how I did my duty. I felt awkward, and I was very resistant. I didn't want to answer any of her questions, because I didn't want to accept her supervision and questioning. I realized that I was revealing my corrupt disposition again, so I prayed to God in my heart for His enlightenment and guidance so that I could learn to submit to such environments, recognize my own corruption, and accept the

supervision and guidance of others. After that, I read some of God's words: **"Antichrists prohibit the intervention, inquiries, or supervision of others in any work they do, and this prohibition is manifested in several ways. One is refusal, plain and simple. 'Stop interfering, making inquiries, and supervising me when I work. Any work I do is my responsibility, I've got an idea of how to do it and I don't need anyone managing me!' This is straight refusal. Another manifestation is the appearance of being receptive, saying 'Ok, let's fellowship and see how the work should be done,' but when others really start making inquiries and trying to find out more about their work, or when they point out a few issues and make a few suggestions, what is their attitude? (They are unreceptive.) That's right—they simply refuse to accept, they find pretexts and excuses to reject others' suggestions, they turn wrong into right and right into wrong, but actually, in their hearts, they know that they are forcing logic, that they are speaking high-sounding words, that what they are saying just theoretical, that their words have none of the reality of what other people say. And yet to protect their status—and knowing full well that they are wrong and that other people are right—they still turn other people's right into wrong, and their own wrong into right, and keep carrying it out, not allowing things that are correct and in line with the truth to be introduced or implemented where they are. ... What is their aim? To not accept other people intervening, inquiring, or supervising, and to make the brothers and sisters think that them acting as they are is justified, correct, in line with the work arrangements of God's house, and in agreement with the principles of action, and that, as a leader, they are abiding by principle. Really only a few people in the church understand the truth; the majority are undoubtedly incapable of**

discernment, they can't see this antichrist for who they really are, and are naturally misled by them" (The Word, Vol. 4. Exposing Antichrists. Item Eight: They Would Have Others Submit Only to Them, Not the Truth or God (Part Two)). **"When Satan acts, it does not permit the intervention of anyone else, it wishes to have the final say in everything it does and to control everything, and no one may supervise or make any inquiries. If anyone interferes or intervenes, this is even less permissible. This is how an antichrist acts; no matter what they do, nobody is allowed to make any inquiries, and no matter how they operate behind the scenes, no one is permitted to intervene. This is the behavior of an antichrist. They act this way because in one sense they have an extremely arrogant disposition and in another are extremely lacking in reason. They are completely lacking in submission, and they do not permit anyone supervising them or inspecting their work. These are truly the actions of a demon, which are completely different from those of a normal person. Anyone who does work requires the cooperation of others, they need other people's assistance, suggestions, and cooperation, and even if there is someone supervising or watching, this is not a bad thing, it is necessary. If mistakes happen to occur in one part of the work, and they are identified by the people watching and promptly fixed, and losses to the work are averted, is this not a great help? And so, when smart people do things, they like being supervised, observed, and having inquiries made by other people. If, by any chance, a mistake does occur, and these people are able to point it out, and the mistake can be promptly rectified, is this not a much desired outcome? No one in this world does not need the help of others. Only people with autism or depression like being on their own and not being in contact with or communicating with other people. When people suffer from autism or depression, they**

are no longer normal. They can no longer control themselves. If people's minds and reason are normal, but they just don't want to communicate with others, and they don't want other people to know about anything they do, they want to do things secretly, privately, and operate behind the scenes, and they don't listen to anything anyone else says, then such people are antichrists, are they not? They are antichrists" (The Word, Vol. 4. Exposing Antichrists. Item Eight: They Would Have Others Submit Only to Them, Not the Truth or God (Part Two)). I realized that I was behaving as God had exposed. It was very hard for me to accept the advice and supervision of others in my duty. Even when I had difficulties, I never exposed them or let others know, because I felt that since this job was given to me, I was responsible, I had the final say, and I could do it my own way. I felt I knew how to do my duty well, and I didn't need a supervisor, nor did I need someone to monitor me or give me advice. I considered the advice of others as an exposure of my inadequacies or as questioning my abilities, so I didn't want to hear it. Now I saw that this was arrogance and foolishness. This was not the reason that normal humanity should possess. My arrogant nature made me not obey anyone, and never accept the supervision and advice of others. I always wanted to have the final say and water the newcomers according to my own will. In the past, I communicated with the newcomers in my own way, which was simply sending messages and rarely calling the newcomers. When some newcomers didn't reply to me for a few days, I would put them aside, and continue to gather with the newcomers who wanted to communicate with me, and as a result, some newcomers couldn't be watered in time, and some of them even quit the gathering group. Weren't my actions the same as an antichrist? Antichrists don't like to be supervised. They want to control everything by themselves, do things their own way or according to their own opinions, they never obey anyone

or take advice from others, and they don't cooperate with others to do their work well. I saw that I was walking the path of an antichrist, and only then was I afraid. I also learned from God's words that everyone has their own shortcomings and deficiencies, so we need advice and help from others. We need to cooperate with people to perform our duties well. The supervisor was helping me by following up on my work and giving me suggestions. Also, it was beneficial to the work, but I didn't want to accept it. As a result, I harmed the work of the church. This was a very serious matter.

After that, I read some of God's words: **“When anyone spends a little time supervising or observing you, or gets to understand you on a deep level, trying to have a heart-to-heart with you and find out what your state has been like during this time, and even sometimes when their attitude is a little harsher, and they prune, discipline, and reproach you a bit, this is all because they have a conscientious and responsible attitude toward the work of the house of God. You should not have any negative thoughts or emotions toward this. What does it mean if you can accept it when others supervise, observe, and try to understand you? That, in your heart, you accept the scrutiny of God. If you do not accept people's supervision, observation, and attempts to understand you—if you push back against all this—are you able to accept the scrutiny of God? The scrutiny of God is more detailed, in-depth, and accurate than when people try to understand you; God's requirements are more specific, exacting, and in-depth. If you cannot accept being supervised by God's chosen people, are your claims that you can accept God's scrutiny not empty words? For you to be able to accept God's scrutiny and examination, you must first accept being supervised by the house of God, the leaders and workers, or the brothers and sisters”**

(The Word, Vol. 5. The Responsibilities of Leaders and Workers. The Responsibilities of Leaders and

Workers (7)). **“If you have a God-fearing heart, then you will naturally be capable of receiving God’s scrutiny, but you must also learn to accept the supervision of God’s chosen people, which requires you to have tolerance and acceptance. If you see someone supervising you, inspecting your work, or checking up on you without your knowledge, and if you grow hot-headed, treat this person like an enemy and despise them, and even attack them and deal with them as a traitor, longing for them to disappear, then this is trouble. Is it not extremely vile? What is the difference between this and a devil king? Is this treating people fairly? If you walk the right path and act the right way, what do you have to fear from people checking up on you? If you are scared, it shows there is something lurking in your heart. If you know in your heart that you have a problem, then you should accept the judgment and chastisement of God. This is reasonable. If you know you have a problem, but you don’t allow anyone to supervise you, inspect your work, or investigate your problem, then you are being highly unreasonable, you are rebelling against and resisting God, and in this case, your problem is even more serious. If God’s chosen people discern that you are an evil person or a disbeliever, then the consequences will be even more troublesome. Thus, those who are able to accept the supervision, examination, and inspection of others are the most reasonable of all, they have tolerance and normal humanity. When you discover you are doing something wrong or have the revelation of a corrupt disposition, if you are able to open up to and communicate with people, this will help those around you to keep an eye on you. It is certainly necessary to accept supervision, but the main thing is to pray to God and rely on Him, subjecting yourself to constant examination. Especially when you have gone the wrong way or done something**

wrong, or when you are about to act or decide something on your own, and someone nearby mentions it and alerts you, you need to accept that and hasten to reflect on yourself, and admit to your mistake, and correct it. This can keep you from setting foot on the path of antichrists. If there is someone helping and alerting you in this way, are you not being protected without knowing it? You are—that is your protection” (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. The Proper Fulfillment of Duty Requires Harmonious Cooperation). God’s words tell us clearly the importance and benefits of accepting others’ supervision. Before, I didn’t really understand the benefits of being supervised, which caused me to resist those who supervised me. I thought they were trying to control me or were showing contempt for me. In my mind, if someone came to me to learn about work, it was as if they felt I was irresponsible, lacking initiative, and incapable of working, and couldn’t do my duty well, or as well as others. So I was very resistant to others’ supervision of me. But from God’s words, I saw that my opinion was wrong and not in line with the truth. Everyone has their shortcomings in their work, and needs the help of other brothers and sisters to improve. But I refused to accept supervision. Could I ever correct the mistakes in my work and do my work better this way? It was very important for my brothers and sisters to supervise my work, because they were bearing a burden for the work and doing their duty. I shouldn’t have an attitude of silence and rejection toward their supervision. I should open up and tell them my difficulties and the actual situation in my work. That will be better for the work of the church. By accepting supervision, I can see my own deficiencies and reflect on whether I do my duty according to principles. Now, I understood God’s intention. Others often supervising and checking my work can stop me from acting on my

own will and thus doing disturbing and disruptive things. This is indeed God's protection for me.

I read another passage of God's word: **"Do you think anyone is perfect? No matter how strong people are, or how capable and talented, they still are not perfect. People must recognize this, it is fact, and it is the attitude that people should have to correctly approach their own merits and strengths or faults; this is the rationality that people should possess. With such rationality, you can properly deal with your own strengths and weaknesses as well as those of others, and this will enable you to work alongside them harmoniously. If you have understood this aspect of the truth and can enter this aspect of the truth reality, then you can get along harmoniously with your brothers and sisters, drawing on their strong points to offset any weaknesses you have. In this way, no matter what duty you are performing or what you are doing, you will always get better at it and have God's blessing"** (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. Part Three). Through God's word, I understood that everyone has their own strengths and weaknesses, and that there are no perfect people in this world. No matter how strong people are, they still have shortcomings and need help from others. No matter what duty we do in the church, it is inseparable from the help and cooperation of others. We have been corrupted so deeply by Satan that we always act by our corrupt dispositions, so we need the reminders and supervision of our brothers and sisters to avoid deviating from principles and reduce our mistakes. When others came to me to understand my problems at work, I should have used it as an opportunity to improve myself, and learned from their strengths to make up for my weaknesses. This would have helped me and the work of the church. I also realized that I was no better than anyone else, including the sister who oversaw my work. I should accept the

guidance and advice of others, correct my deviations and mistakes, and dare to reveal my own weaknesses and seek help from others. This is being a person with normal reason and humanity. After that, I started to accept my sister's advice, and when she asked questions or wanted to know about any aspect of the newcomers' situations, I discussed it openly and told her in detail. Practicing like this, I became more effective in my duty.

One day, my sister asked me about the newcomers' situation. I answered her questions without reservation and gave details about the reasons for some newcomers' irregular attendance. She reminded me of some key points, and I wrote them down and carried them all out. I saw that it was very good to take advice from others, which was beneficial both for me and the work of the church. In the future, I am willing to accept the supervision of others and do my duty well.

28. The Elderly Can Still Bear Witness for God

By Liu En, China

I began believing in the Lord Jesus at the age of 62. Knowing that the Lord promises His followers entry into the kingdom of heaven and eternal life made me feel like I had hope in this life, and the thought of receiving such a great blessing made my heart sing. I started working hard and expending myself for the Lord, full of boundless energy every day. Three years later, I had the good fortune to accept Almighty God's work of the last days. I was excited to have welcomed the Lord's return, and to have hope of being fully saved and entering the kingdom of heaven. So, I started working even harder in my pursuit, sacrificing and expending myself even more, actively preaching the gospel and doing my duty, and even going out to preach the gospel in the evening. The brothers and sisters later elected me as a church leader and then a preacher. Having the chance to do such important duties during my old age made me very happy. I felt especially honored to see that even though I was the oldest one in our gatherings, I could still host gatherings and help others resolve their problems. I figured as long as I worked hard in my pursuit, I could certainly be saved just like the younger folks, so I poured my heart into my duty.

Seven or eight years went by in a flash, and my health and energy weren't what they used to be. Then I had a stroke when I was 73, but after being on an IV drip for a couple of days, my symptoms practically disappeared without any residual issues. I felt God must have seen that I was willing to expend myself for Him wholeheartedly, so He had blessed and protected me. I was really grateful, and continued on with my duty. However, taking my health into consideration, the leader changed my duty to hosting the other brothers and sisters at home. Knowing there were

several duties I wouldn't be doing anymore, and that I'd just be hosting brothers and sisters at home, left me feeling desolate. I envied all of the younger brothers and sisters, so full of energy and busy with all sorts of duties. I thought, "I'm old and in poor health. I can't run around now no matter how much I'd like to, and there are many kinds of duties I can't do anymore. Doesn't this mean I'm worthless? I wish I could go back 10 or 20 years and do all sorts of different duties just like them. Then my chances of being blessed and gaining salvation would be so much greater! Right now, though, as an old person, I just can't compare with the younger people." That thought left me feeling drained, and before I knew it, I was despondent. I also thought back to when I had a stroke and how it's a disease that tends to recur, so if I had another one someday, that could be the end of me, and I wouldn't see the day of God's glory. Then how would I be saved? What was the point of believing in God, then? These were gloomy, despondent thoughts for me. For a while, I couldn't even read God's words or listen to hymns. In my misery, I prayed to God, "God! I feel that I have no hope of salvation any longer. I'm so negative and feel sapped of all life. God, I don't want to distance myself from You. I know I'm not in the right state, but I don't know how to fix this. Please help guide me out of this incorrect state."

In order to not be taken over by these negative thoughts, I pushed myself to start reading God's words again. I read this in God's words one day: **"God's wish is for every person to be made perfect, to be ultimately gained by Him, to be completely cleansed by Him, and to become people He loves. No matter whether I say you are backward or of poor caliber, this is all fact. My saying this does not prove that I intend to forsake you, that I have lost hope in you, much less that I am unwilling to save you. Today I have come to do the work of your**

salvation, which is to say that the work I do is a continuation of the work of salvation. Every person has the chance to be made perfect: Provided that you are willing, provided that you pursue, in the end you will be able to achieve this result, and not one of you will be forsaken. If you are of poor caliber, My requirements of you will be in accordance with your poor caliber; if you are of high caliber, My requirements of you will be in accordance with your high caliber; if you are ignorant and illiterate, My requirements of you will be in accordance with your illiteracy; if you are literate, My requirements of you will be in accordance with the fact that you are literate; if you are elderly, My requirements of you will be in accordance with your age; if you are capable of providing hospitality, My requirements of you will be in accordance with this capability; if you say you cannot offer hospitality, and can only perform a certain function, whether it be spreading the gospel, or taking care of the church, or attending to other general affairs, My perfection of you will be in accordance with the function that you perform. Being loyal, submitting to the very end, and seeking to have supreme love for God—this is what you must accomplish, and there are no better practices than these three things” (The Word, Vol. 1. The

Appearance and Work of God. Restoring the Normal Life of Man and Taking Him to a Wonderful Destination). God’s words clarified things for me right away. God doesn’t determine people’s outcomes based on how much they’ve suffered for Him, the extent of their qualifications, or the scope of their duties. As long as they truly expend themselves for Him, pursue the truth, demonstrate genuine submission to Him, do their duty in a way that is up to standard, and bear true testimony to Him, then He will approve of them. But I didn’t understand His intention and didn’t know what kind of people He saves. I always believed that by expending myself for God, being able to suffer and

pay a price, and doing much work, I would be approved by God. But since I was getting old and couldn't work as hard as the young people, I had already ruled out my own salvation. I became mired in negativity and misunderstandings; I was so rebellious against God! In truth, even though I was old and I couldn't do as many duties as young people, God didn't make the same requirements of me. He also wasn't depriving me of chances to pursue the truth and do my duty. My mind and reason were still intact; I could still read God's words and do everything I was able to in my duty. But without seeking God's intention, I had labeled myself as old and useless, as having fallen out of God's favor. Wasn't that making assumptions about God? God never said that doing a lot of duties would get a person saved, or that once someone gets old He would eliminate them and not save them anymore. He was actually crystal clear about how older people should pursue the truth and approach their duty. As long as I was loyal and submissive until the end, and I could strive to love God, I had hope of salvation. Not looking at things based on God's words was so foolish of me. I treated my own notions and imaginings as the truth, misunderstanding God's intention all along. Realizing this gave me a guilty conscience, and I came before God in prayer, "Oh God! I will stop being negative and resistant because of my wrong views. As long as I have the ability to do my duty another day, I will strive upward and do my best to pursue the truth." Prayer and the guidance of God's words brought me some comfort—I was no longer so upset. I thought, "As long as I am in full possession of my reason and still able to move, I will rely on God to be a good host to my brothers and sisters, do my utmost in my duty, and offer my heartfelt service to God."

But there was still something I didn't understand. Why did I get negative when I saw I wasn't as capable as the young people, to the point

where I even thought of betraying God? What was the root cause of that? In my seeking, I read this in God's words: **"People believe in God in order to be blessed, to be rewarded, to be crowned. Doesn't this exist in everyone's heart? It is a fact that it does. Although people don't often talk about it, and even cover up their motive and desire to obtain blessings, this desire and motive deep in people's hearts has always been unshakable. No matter how much spiritual theory people understand, what experience or knowledge they have, what duty they can perform, how much suffering they endure, or how much of a price they pay, they never let go of the motivation for blessings hidden deep in their hearts, and always silently toil in its service. Isn't this the thing buried deepest inside people's hearts? Without this motivation to receive blessings, how would you feel? With what attitude would you perform your duty and follow God? What would become of people if this motivation to receive blessings that is hidden in their hearts was gotten rid of? It is possible that many people would become negative, while some would become demotivated in their duties. They would lose interest in their belief in God, as if their soul had vanished. They would appear as if their heart had been snatched away. This is why I say the motivation for blessings is something hidden deep in people's hearts"**

(The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. Six Indicators of Life Growth).

"Antichrists believe in God solely for the purpose of obtaining profit and blessings. Even if they endure some suffering or pay some prices, it's all in order to make a deal with God. Their intention and desire to obtain blessings and rewards is immense, and they cling to it tightly. They don't accept any of the many truths that God has expressed, in their hearts they always think that believing in God is all about obtaining blessings and securing a good destination, that this is the

highest principle, and that nothing can surpass it. They think that people should not believe in God unless for the sake of gaining blessings, and that if it wasn't for the sake of blessings, belief in God would have no meaning or value, that it would lose its meaning and value. Were these ideas instilled in antichrists by someone else? Do they derive from someone else's education or influence? No, they are determined by the inherent nature essence of antichrists, which is something no one can change. Despite God incarnate speaking so many words today, antichrists don't accept any of them, but instead resist and condemn them. The nature of their being averse to the truth and hating the truth can never change. If they can't change, what does this indicate? It indicates that their nature is wicked. This is not an issue of pursuing or not pursuing the truth; this is a wicked disposition, it is brazenly clamoring against God and antagonizing God. This is the nature essence of antichrists; it is their true face" (The Word, Vol. 4. Exposing Antichrists. Item Seven: They Are Wicked, Insidious, and Deceitful (Part Two)). **"Antichrists consider their duty as a transaction. They do their duty with the intention of making a transaction and gaining blessings. They think that believing in God should be for the sake of gaining blessings, and that gaining blessings through doing their duty is appropriate. They distort the positive thing that is performing one's duty and denigrate the value and significance of performing one's duty as a created being, while also denigrating the legitimacy of doing this; they turn the duty that created beings should naturally perform into a transaction"** (The Word, Vol. 4. Exposing Antichrists. Item Nine (Part Seven)). I saw from God's words that antichrists only believe in God so they can receive blessings; their transactional mindset never changes, and they won't give up regardless of how difficult or miserable things get. If they lose all hope of being blessed,

it's as if they've lost their life entirely. They feel that continuing to believe in God is meaningless, and they fight against and resist God. Comparing myself to God's words, I saw that I was acting exactly like an antichrist. When I believed in the Lord, I was overjoyed to hear that my belief in the Lord could get me entry into the kingdom of heaven. I felt that to gain grace in this life, then eternal life in the world to come, any suffering for the Lord would be worthwhile. Being blessed and entering the kingdom of heaven became the goal of my faith, and I thought that the more I sacrificed and expended myself, the greater my blessings would be in the future. After accepting Almighty God's work of the last days, I felt even more that my dream of being blessed would come true, and had more drive for my duty. Even though I was 66 at that time, I didn't see myself as old at all. I simply worked hard in my duty. I rode my bike all over the place for gatherings and even if I had a stroke later on, I didn't care. I just wanted to try hard to do my duty, using the sweat of my brow and suffering as capital to exchange for blessings. But when I saw that I'd aged and couldn't do as many duties anymore, that I couldn't keep traveling around like I used to and was becoming slowly unable to do much at all, I felt like my hopes of being blessed were getting slimmer. I didn't want to accept it. Even though I said nothing, in my heart I blamed God; I didn't want to accept God's sovereignty, so I became negative, resistant, and irrational. My motive in my faith was to be blessed, which was making a deal with God. Wasn't that an antichrist's fallacious view of belief in God? I'd twisted something as positive and wonderful as doing a duty. I only knew to use doing my duty and traveling around as a way to make deals with God in exchange for the blessings of the kingdom of heaven, treating my duty like a tool and bargaining chip to satisfy my ambitions and desires. I really was dizzied by my desire of being blessed and could only think of getting into the kingdom

of heaven. I only cared about whether I'd be blessed, and what my outcome and destination would be. I had no thoughts of repaying God's love or understanding His earnest intentions. Did I even have a conscience at all? God has given me the breath of life and the chance to do a duty. This is already His great grace for me. But I still complained to God, always trying to reason with Him, being negative and resistant. I was so rebellious, and even if God took my life from me, it would be His righteousness. Realizing all of this, I prayed to God in my heart, asking Him to guide me to let go of my motives for blessings and to submit to His sovereignty and arrangements. I thought of God's words: **"I decide the destination of each person not on the basis of age, seniority, amount of suffering, and least of all, the degree to which they invite pity, but according to whether they possess the truth. There is no other choice but this"** (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. Prepare Sufficient Good Deeds for Your Destination). God's words helped me come to my senses. I realized that when God determines our outcome and destination, it has nothing to do with how much we've sacrificed or expended for Him, how much we've worked or suffered. It's based on whether we've gained the truth, and if our dispositions have changed. Doing many duties doesn't mean we possess the truth or have changed our disposition. No matter how many duties I do, the key is whether I'm on the path of pursuing the truth. Before, I did a lot of duties and traveled all over the place, but never sought the truth. I wanted to use my superficial efforts in exchange for a good destination. I didn't see the transactional, adversarial mindset I had deep within me toward God. Ultimately, when my desire to be blessed was shattered, I argued with God and went against Him. In truth, if all I did was run around and expend myself without pursuing the truth, then I would only become more selfish and arrogant, and never achieve dispositional change. I'd end up reasoning

and arguing with God over the work I'd done, becoming more and more evil. This is just like Paul—he did a lot of work, and he did great work, but he only did that work in exchange for a crown of righteousness. It was always a transaction with God. He didn't repent even on the verge of death, and ended up punished by God. Peter, on the other hand, didn't do much work, but in his faith he pursued the truth wholeheartedly, and in all things sought God's intention and sought to submit to Him. He had no conditions and didn't consider whether he'd be blessed. In the end, he achieved the supreme love of God and submission onto death, gained God's approval, and was perfected by God. Both Paul and Peter were believers, but their motives and perspectives in pursuit were different, and so were their outcomes. From this we can see that God is righteous, and only if we pursue the truth and dispositional change can we align with God's intention. What I was pursuing and the path I was on was just as absurd and wrong as Paul's, and my outcome would have surely been the same as his. Thankfully, God's words enlightened and guided me to understand His intention, and what perspective I should have toward my faith. I also learned to submit to God's sovereignty and arrangements, and to be a reasonable created being. This is God's love. My state improved a lot after I understood God's intention, and I was so grateful to Him. Afterward, when brothers and sisters came to gather I offered hospitality. When they didn't come, I read God's words calmly and sought the truth according to my state.

I read a passage of God's words one day: **“God does not merely pay a price for each person in the decades from their birth to the present. As God sees it, you have come into this world countless times, and have been reincarnated countless times. Who is in charge of this? God is in charge of this. You have no way of knowing these things. Each time you**

come into this world, God personally makes arrangements for you: He arranges how many years you will live, the sort of family that you will be born into, when you will build a home and a career, as well as what you will do in this world and how you will make a living. God arranges a way for you to earn a living, so that you can accomplish your mission in this life unhindered. And as for what you should do in your next incarnation, God arranges and delivers that life to you according to what you ought to have and what ought to be given to you.... God has made these arrangements for you many times, and, at last, you were born into the age of the last days, into your present family. God arranged an environment for you in which you could believe in Him, He allowed you to hear His voice and come back before Him, so that you could follow Him and perform a duty in His house. It is only with such guidance from God that you have lived until today. You do not know how many times you have been born among man, nor how many times your appearance has changed, nor how many families you have had, nor how many ages and dynasties you have lived through—but God's hand has been supporting you the whole time, and He has always been watching over you. How much God toils for a person's sake! Some people say, 'I'm sixty years old. For sixty years, God has been watching over me, protecting me, and guiding me. If, when I'm old, I can't perform a duty and I can't do anything—will God still care about me?' Is this not a silly thing to say? God does not have sovereignty over a person's fate, and watch over them and protect them for just a single lifespan. If it were just the matter of a single lifespan, a single lifetime, that would fail to demonstrate that God is almighty and has sovereignty over everything. The labor that God does and the price that He pays for a person is not merely to arrange what they do in this life,

but to arrange for them a countless number of lifetimes. God takes full responsibility for every soul that is reincarnated. He works attentively, paying the price of His life, guiding every person and arranging each of their lives. God toils and pays a price in this way for man's sake, and He bestows upon man all of these truths and this life. If people do not perform the duty of created beings in these final days, and they do not return before the Creator—if, in the end, no matter how many lives and generations they have lived through, they do not do their duties well and they fail to meet God's demands—would their debt to God not then be too great? Would they not be unworthy of all the prices God has paid? They would be so lacking in conscience, they would not deserve to be called people, as their debt to God would be too great. ... The grace, love, and mercy that God shows man are not merely a kind of attitude—they are a fact, as well. What fact is that? It is that God puts His words within you, enlightening you, so that you may see what is lovely about Him, and what this world is all about, so that your heart is filled with light, allowing you to understand His words and the truth. In this way, without knowing it, you gain the truth. God does so much work on you in a very real way, enabling you to gain the truth. When you gain the truth, when you gain that most precious thing which is eternal life, God's intentions are satisfied. When God sees that people are pursuing the truth and willing to cooperate with Him, He is happy and contented. He is then of an attitude, and while He is of that attitude, He goes to work, and approves of and blesses man. He says, 'I will reward you with the blessings that you deserve.' And then you will have gained the truth and the life. When you have knowledge of the Creator and you have gained His appreciation, will you still feel an emptiness in your heart? You will not. You will feel fulfilled and have a

sense of enjoyment. Is this not what it means for one's life to have value? This is the most valuable and meaningful life" (The Word, Vol. 3. The

Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. Paying the Price to Gain the Truth Is of Great Significance).

God's words were incredibly comforting and touching for me. It didn't matter how old I was or what my health was like; as long as I loved and pursued the truth, God wouldn't disdain me. Unfortunately, I'd misunderstood God's intention. I thought that since I was old and useless, I couldn't do as many duties anymore. I thought one day I could get seriously ill and suddenly be gone, with no hope of salvation. I felt there was no meaning in believing in God, and I didn't want to strive upward. Influenced by my wrong views, I had been misunderstanding God's intention. I'd sunk into a weak and negative state, and was toyed with by Satan. Before, I didn't know that as a created being, I should submit to God and satisfy Him. Without that sense, I simply kept my faith in exchange for grace and blessings—I was making a deal with God. Now I could see that with that pursuit, even if I lived a hundred more years there would be no meaning or value in it. When Job faced all those disasters, for example, he never once thought about what he gained or lost. When he broke out in boils and life was unbearable, he never blamed God. He had true belief in God, submitted to His sovereignty and arrangements, and praised His name. He bore a resounding witness for God before Satan, and ultimately he was blessed by God. There was also Peter, who always pursued to love and satisfy God his entire life, and focused on practicing the Lord's words in his real life. Ultimately, he was crucified upside down for God, showing his supreme love and ultimate submission to Him, living out a life of meaning, and gaining God's approval. Now, I understood that as a believer, pursuing to submit to God and satisfy God in everything, doing a created being's duty well, understanding and gaining the truth in the course of doing one's duty,

and coming to submit to and love God, is the way to not live an empty life, and to live a life of meaning. This is the only way to gain God's approval. Always trying to make deals with God, and exchange working hard and expending oneself for the blessings of the kingdom of heaven is vile behavior, and results in a life that has no meaning or value. I couldn't keep thinking about whether I'd be blessed in the future or not. I should simply pursue the truth with each day I had left, do my best to fulfill my duty by relying on God, and pursue dispositional change. Even if one day I get seriously ill and am facing death, without the ability to do my duty anymore, I'd still submit to God's arrangements. What I should focus on now is doing my best to do my duty and fulfill my responsibility in this lifetime. Whatever my outcome is, whether life or death, is up to God's sovereignty and arrangement. It's not something I, as a created being, should consider. I felt much more relaxed when I thought about it that way.

After that, I regularly read God's words and listened to hymns every day. When I realized that I revealed corruption, I prayed, sought the truth, recognized my satanic dispositions, and opened up in seeking and fellowship with my brothers and sisters. I gradually gained a bit from all that. Usually, when there was a duty for me to do, I was actively engaged, and preached the gospel to those around me as much as possible. When I saw brothers and sisters writing experiential testimony articles, I also practiced writing my experiences into articles to testify to God. Doing all of this made me feel fulfilled and at peace.

One day, I heard this hymn of God's words: **"A Created Being Should Be at the Mercy of God."** I was really touched by it. The second passage mentioning Peter's experience was particularly moving for me. God's words say: **"In the past, Peter was crucified upside down for the sake of God; but you should satisfy God in the end, and exhaust all**

your energy for His sake. What can a created being do on behalf of God? You should therefore give yourself up to God, sooner rather than later, for Him to dispose of you as He wishes. As long as it makes God happy and pleased, then let Him do as He will with you. What right do men have to speak words of complaint?" (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and

Work of God. Interpretations of the Mysteries of "God's Words to the Entire Universe," Chapter 41).

I listened to it over and over again, and just couldn't get enough of it. Every single line of it was inspiring and moving for me, and I couldn't keep my tears from rolling down my face. I was a created being who'd been corrupted by Satan and had lived to such an old age, but I still had the chance to follow God and experience His work, do my duty and bear witness for God. What a wonderful blessing! Now, by eating and drinking God's words, I've come to understand my own corruptions, and have turned around my selfish and vile motives for blessings. This is God's grace! I will praise God until the very end, even if He gives me nothing. My life will still have been worth it! I will seek to be a created being who is reasonable and submissive to God. No matter how my health is or what my outcome is, I am willing to let God orchestrate as He wishes.

29. The Twists and Turns in My Journey to God

By Sun Yu, China

I became a Christian in the year 2000. South Korean pastors would share sermons with us pretty frequently. In one service, a pastor read a passage of Scripture, then told us to be tolerant and patient in all things—that it's not by only listening to sermons, but by putting them into practice that we bring glory to God. Only then can we enter the kingdom of heaven in the future. From that time on, I began treating my family and friends with love and kindness. If anyone offended me, I'd pray to the Lord to help me forgive them. Once or twice, it wasn't a problem. But over time, I couldn't maintain it. Sometimes I'd lose my cool, and lecture them on some little thing. I'd feel guilty after that. I wondered, "I'm constantly sinning and confessing, and can't break free from the bonds of sin. Will I then be taken into the kingdom of heaven when the Lord comes?" I reached out to my pastor to ask how to resolve the problem of sin. He told me to confess and repent, pray more, read the Bible more, and be tolerant and patient. Every time he said this, without directing me toward a specific path, I was disappointed. I thought of God's words: **"You shall therefore be holy, for I am holy"** (Leviticus 11:45). And in Hebrews it says: **"Without holiness no man shall see the Lord"** (Hebrews 12:14). I felt that someone like me—always sinning and confessing, unable to practice the Lord's words—couldn't enter the kingdom of heaven. I was quite miserable and wore a frown on my face every day. Later, I noticed the church was rife with jealousy and infighting. Fighting for the podium, a preacher threw an older preacher's Bible onto the ground in a service and pressured him to leave. Some people were even conducting business in the church. I thought of the Lord Jesus' words: **"It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer; but you have**

made it a den of thieves” (Matthew 21:13). How could a church like that have the work of the Holy Spirit? Was this not a den of thieves? I felt that there was no way to gain sustenance from those services and my issue of sinning would never be resolved. I wanted to find a church with the Holy Spirit’s work. My elder sister took me to some other churches, but they were all in the same state. When I asked them how to cast off sin, none of them could point out a path. They said the Lord Jesus had already forgiven our sins—we just needed to pray and confess. After listening, I felt empty inside and didn’t even want to attend services anymore. One day I had a sudden idea: Perhaps God wasn’t at work in the churches around here? When the Korean pastors had visited before, they’d seemed very pious, and had come all the way to China to shepherd churches. They had so much faith. Was God at work in Korean churches? I had to go to Korea and seek a church with the work of the Holy Spirit there.

In 2007, my elder sister and I took our families to Korea. She introduced me to a church where many Chinese people attended services. Church members helped Chinese people find jobs, which helped solve their basic needs. The members of that church were really loving, so I attended services there—perhaps they had the work of the Holy Spirit. During a service, the pastor said, “On my most recent trip to China, I heard God has already returned, that He appeared and is working in China, and is called Almighty God. But China is a backward country. Its people are of poor caliber. God is so noble—how could He possibly appear and work there? Many are spreading the preaching of Eastern Lightning. Do not listen. With stature as small as yours, once involved, you’ll never get out.” When I heard him say this, I fully agreed, thinking, “So many churches in China lack the work of the Holy Spirit. The government there oppresses believers, and the Chinese people worship idols. Could God appear and work in

China? That would be impossible.” But soon, I found that while the pastor preached with eloquence, what he did afterward was another matter; he wasn’t practicing the Lord’s way. I was so discouraged. When I asked the pastor about how to resolve sinfulness, he said irritably, “Everyone is corrupt. Sinning is normal. Confess to the Lord, and you’ll be forgiven. Because you are willing to repent, the Lord has already forgiven your sins.” What the pastor said disgusted me. I thought, “Why was he saying the exact same thing as the Chinese pastors? Sin cannot be cast off in an instant, but we need to strive to change ourselves more or less. Why bother confessing, if we don’t change anything at all after confessing? Doesn’t that make us the same as the nonbelievers? What meaning is there in believing in the Lord like this?” Once again, I was disappointed, but I didn’t want to give up. I believed that the Lord wouldn’t cast me aside, that one day I’d find a church with the Holy Spirit’s work. I mulled over this issue a lot after that. While walking the streets, I was looking for crosses, for Christian churches, and if I heard positive things about any pastor’s sermons, I’d walk through wind, rain, snow, or sleet, clinging to a shred of hope, to listen, longing for my confusion to be resolved. I visited over 40 churches in Korea without finding a single one that had the Holy Spirit’s work. None of the pastors could resolve my problem. At a loss, I tossed and turned through sleepless nights. I called out from my heart, “Oh Lord, where on earth are You? Have You abandoned me?” In those years, I felt a great weight on my heart—I was repressed, and in pain.

In the midst of this pain and desperation, in June 2015, my elder sister came to my house and told me happily, “I have great news! The Lord came back a long time ago. He appeared and is working in China, expressing lots of truths. The gospel has made it to Korea now.” I thought, “God is working in China? How could that be?” I said obstinately, “A pastor told us back in

2009 that there's no way God would work in China, because China is backward and the people are of poor caliber. God is honorable and great—why would He work in China?" Then I just went to wash the dishes. She took out a book and said patiently, "This book, **The Scroll Opened by the Lamb**, contains words expressed by God in the last days. I'll read some of it for you." As she said this, she began to read God's words: "**When Jesus came into the world of man, He ushered in the Age of Grace and ended the Age of Law. During the last days, God once more became flesh, and with this incarnation He ended the Age of Grace and ushered in the Age of Kingdom. All those who are able to accept the second incarnation of God will be led into the Age of Kingdom, and will moreover become able to personally accept the guidance of God. Though Jesus came among man and did much work, He only completed the work of redeeming all mankind and served as man's sin offering; He did not rid man of all his corrupt disposition. Fully saving man from the influence of Satan not only required Jesus to become the sin offering and bear the sins of man, but it also required God to do even greater work to rid man completely of his satanically corrupted disposition. And so, after man was forgiven of his sins, God returned to the flesh to lead man into the new age, and began the work of chastisement and judgment. This work has brought man into a higher realm. All those who submit under His dominion shall enjoy higher truth and receive greater blessings. They shall truly live in the light, and they shall gain the truth, the way, and the life**" (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. Preface). "**If people remain stuck in the Age of Grace, then they shall never be rid of their corrupt disposition, let alone know the inherent disposition of God. If people always live in the midst of an abundance of grace, but do not have the way of life that**

allows them to know God or to satisfy Him, then they will never truly gain Him in their belief in Him. This type of belief is pitiful indeed. When you have finished reading this book, when you have experienced each step of the work of God incarnate in the Age of Kingdom, you will feel that the desires you have had for many years have finally been realized. You will feel that only now have you truly seen God face to face; only now have you gazed upon His countenance, heard His personal utterances, appreciated the wisdom of His work, and truly sensed how practical and almighty He is. You will feel that you have gained many things that people in times past had never seen nor possessed. At this time, you will clearly know what it is to believe in God, and what it is to align with God's intentions. Of course, if you cling to views of the past, and reject or deny the fact of the second incarnation of God, then you will remain empty-handed, acquiring nothing, and ultimately you will be pronounced guilty of opposing God. Those who are able to submit to the truth and submit to the work of God shall be claimed under the name of the second incarnate God—the Almighty. They will be able to accept God's personal guidance, gaining more and higher truths, as well as real life. They shall behold the vision never seen before by people of the past: 'And I turned to see the voice that spoke with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; And in the middle of the seven candlesticks one like to the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the breasts with a golden girdle. His head and His hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and His eyes were as a flame of fire; And His feet like to fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and His voice as the sound of many waters. And He had in His right hand seven stars: and out of His mouth went a sharp two edged sword: and His countenance was as the

sun shines in its strength' (Revelation 1:12–16). **This vision is the expression of God's entire disposition, and the expression of His entire disposition is also the expression of the work of God in His present incarnation"** (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. Preface). Listening to this, I was taken aback. This disclosed the mysteries of the Book of Revelation. It was so authoritative—no human could have uttered those words! I thought of the authority with which the Lord Jesus spoke when He came to work, and wondered if these really were God's utterances. Immediately my spirit surged, and I started listening carefully. Particularly when my sister read some prophecies from Revelation, I was thinking that they weren't something any person could unveil. Revelation tells us: **"Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, has prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof"** (Revelation 5:5). Only the Lamb, only God could unveil these mysteries. Was this the word of God? Was it possible He had appeared and was working in China? Could I find the answer to what had been bewildering me all these years in that book? I became very curious about this book. Just then, my sister read this: **"The first part of this book is also the fulfillment of these words in Revelation: 'He that has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.' These words represent the initial stage of the work that God began in the Age of Kingdom"** (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. Preface). That interested me further—wasn't this the prophecy in the Book of Revelation? Had prophecies in Revelation been fulfilled? Were these God's words? Wanting to read it thoroughly, I asked my sister to leave the book with me.

I was overcome with joy when she handed the book to me. I couldn't wait to open it. But I also had some concerns. Was this book actually in accordance with the Scripture? I put both the Bible and this book on the bed

side by side, comparing them. In the book, I read this passage: **“Only when I pass into the new heaven and earth do I take the other part of My glory and reveal it first in the land of Canaan, causing a glimmer of light to shine forth in the whole earth, sunk in the pitchy darkness of night, that the whole earth may come to the light; that men all over the earth may come to draw strength from the power of the light, allowing My glory to increase and appear anew to every nation; and that all humanity may realize that I have long ago come to the human world and long ago brought My glory from Israel to the East; for My glory shines from the East and it was brought over from the Age of Grace to this day. But it was from Israel that I departed and from there that I arrived in the East. Only when the light of the East gradually turns white will the darkness across the earth begin to turn to light, and only then will man discover that I have long ago gone from Israel and am rising anew in the East. Having once descended into Israel and later departed from it, I cannot again be born into Israel, because My work leads all of the universe and, what is more, the lightning flashes straight from East to West. For this reason I have descended in the East and brought Canaan to the people of the East. I shall bring people from all over the earth to the land of Canaan, and so I continue to issue forth utterances in the land of Canaan to control the entire universe. At this time, there is no light in all the earth apart from Canaan, and all men are imperiled by hunger and cold. I gave My glory to Israel and then took it away, thereby bringing the Israelites to the East and all of humanity to the East. I have brought them all to the light so that they may be reunited with it, and be in association with it, and no longer have to search for it. I shall let all who are searching see the light again and see the glory I had in Israel; I shall let them see that I have long**

ago come down upon a white cloud into the midst of mankind, let them see the countless clouds of white and fruits in their abundant clusters, and, what is more, let them see Jehovah God of Israel. I shall let them look upon the Master of the Jews, the longed-for Messiah, and the full appearance of Me who have been persecuted by kings throughout the ages. I shall work upon the entire universe and I shall perform great work, revealing all My glory and all My deeds to man in the last days. I shall show My glorious countenance in its fullness to those who have waited many years for Me, to those who have longed for Me to come upon a white cloud, to Israel that has longed for Me to appear once again, and to all mankind who persecute Me, so that all will know that I have long ago taken away My glory and brought it to the East, and it is no longer in Judea. For the last days have already come!" (The Word, Vol.

1. The Appearance and Work of God. The Seven Thunders Peal—Prophesying That the Gospel of the Kingdom Shall Spread Throughout the Universe). I then compared it to a prophecy in the Bible: **"As the lightning comes out of the east, and shines even to the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be"** (Matthew 24:27). It matched up with the Lord Jesus' words—it was totally in line with the Bible. Who aside from God could unlock these mysteries? These words drew me in—the more I read, the more I wanted to read. I felt like in this book, I'd find the answer to the confusion in my heart.

I read another passage after that: **"Since we are searching for the footprints of God, it behooves us to search for God's intentions, for the words of God, for His utterances—because wherever there are new words spoken by God, the voice of God is there, and wherever there are the footsteps of God, God's deeds are there. Wherever there is the expression of God, there God appears, and wherever God appears, there the truth, the way, and the life exist. In seeking God's footprints,**

you have ignored the words ‘God is the truth, the way, and the life.’ And so, many people, even when they receive the truth, do not believe that they have found God’s footprints, and still less do they acknowledge the appearance of God. What a grave mistake! The appearance of God cannot be reconciled with man’s notions, still less can God appear at the behest of man. God makes His own choices and His own plans when He does His work; moreover, He has His own objectives and His own methods. Whatever work He does, He has no need to discuss it with man or seek his advice, much less to notify each and every person of His work. This is the disposition of God, and it should, moreover, be recognized by everyone. If you desire to witness the appearance of God, to follow God’s footsteps, then you must first walk away from your own notions. You must not demand that God do this or that, much less should you place Him within your own confines and limit Him to your own notions. Instead, you should demand of yourselves how you ought to seek God’s footprints, how you ought to accept God’s appearance, and how you ought to submit to the new work of God: This is what man should do. Since man is not the truth, and is not possessed of the truth, he should seek, accept, and submit”

(The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. Appendix 1: The Appearance of God Has Ushered in a New Age). I read this passage twice in a row. I was thinking that wherever the voice of God can be found, His footsteps can also be found. That’s where God appears. Were these really God’s words? No one aside from God could say anything like that. That’s what they read in The Church of Almighty God, so maybe God was working in that church. I was thrilled, and continued reading.

Later, I came across this passage: **“Today, God has returned to the world to do His work. His first stop is the exemplar of dictatorial**

rulership: China, the staunch bastion of atheism. God has gained a group of people by His wisdom and power. During this period, He has been hunted by China's ruling party by every means and subjected to great suffering, with no place to rest His head, unable to find shelter. Despite this, God still continues the work He intends to do: He utters His voice and spreads the gospel. None can fathom the almightiness of God. In China, a country that regards God as an enemy, God has never ceased His work. Instead, more people have accepted His work and word, for God saves each and every member of mankind to the greatest extent possible" (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. Appendix 2: God Presides Over the Fate of All Mankind). But when I read this part, **"Today, God has returned to the world to do His work. His first stop is the exemplar of dictatorial rulership: China,"** I immediately paused, feeling disappointed. With my eyes fixed on those two sentences, I just kept thinking, "God, in China? How could that be? Maybe I shouldn't read it—what if I go astray?" But then I thought that these words seemed like the voice of God. If I didn't look into it and the Lord really had returned, wouldn't I miss out on my chance? I felt incredibly torn and couldn't stop wondering: Why would God appear and work in China? I compared this to the Bible and read what the Lord Jesus said: **"As the lightning comes out of the east, and shines even to the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be"** (Matthew 24:27). Was "the east" a reference to China? But China was so backward, and atheism had total power in the country. Could God appear and work in China? This book very clearly stated that this was so. Still I was hesitant—should I continue, or give up? Then I thought about how much I'd struggled in my search, all those years. So as long as there was a glimmer of hope, I couldn't give up. So I decided to go to The Church of Almighty God to investigate.

The next day, I went to The Church of Almighty God. A brother was in the middle of a sermon, talking about precisely what I'd been wondering—how to be freed from sin. He was reading Almighty God's words: **"In the Age of Grace, the demons were cast out from man with the laying on of hands and prayer, but the corrupt dispositions within man still remained. Man was healed of his sickness and forgiven his sins, but as for just how man was to be purged of the corrupt satanic dispositions within him, this work had yet to be done. Man was only saved and forgiven his sins for his faith, but the sinful nature of man was not extirpated and still remained within him. The sins of man were forgiven through the agency of the incarnate God, but this did not mean that man no longer had sin within him. The sins of man could be forgiven through the sin offering, but as for just how man can be made to sin no more, and how his sinful nature may be extirpated completely and transformed, he has no way of solving this problem. The sins of man were forgiven, and this is because of the work of God's crucifixion, but man continued to live within his corrupt satanic disposition of old. This being so, man must be completely saved from his corrupt satanic disposition, so that his sinful nature may be completely extirpated, never to develop again, thus enabling the disposition of man to be transformed. This would require man to grasp the path of growth in life, to grasp the way of life, and to grasp the way to change his disposition. Furthermore, it would require man to act in accordance with this path, so that his disposition may gradually be changed and he may live under the shining of the light, so that all that he does may be in accord with the intentions of God, so that he may cast away his corrupt satanic disposition, and so that he may break free from Satan's influence of darkness, thereby emerging fully from sin. Only then will**

man receive complete salvation” (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. The Mystery of the Incarnation (4)). He fellowshiped, “We can see from Almighty God’s words that in the Age of Grace, God did only the work of redemption. The Lord Jesus preached the gospel of the kingdom of heaven, telling people to confess and repent. He healed the sick, cast out demons, and forgave people’s sins. He also bestowed boundless grace upon humanity. Finally, He was crucified as a sin offering for all of mankind. Ever since then, to be forgiven from sin and enjoy God’s grace and blessings, all we have to do is pray and confess. This was the Lord Jesus’ work in the Age of Grace. So, did the completion of the Lord Jesus’ work of redemption mean God’s work of salvation was done? Of course not. The work of redemption merely forgave us of our sins, but the root of our sinfulness and our sinful nature weren’t resolved. We still can’t help but sin all the time. We’re arrogant, we show off, we lie and cheat. Sometimes we feel things like jealousy and hatred. We live in a state of sinning by day and confessing by night that we can’t extricate ourselves from. It says in Hebrews 12:14, **‘Without holiness no man shall see the Lord.’** God is holy and righteous. How are we, so filthy and corrupt, worthy to enter the kingdom of heaven? Almighty God has come in the last days, expressing truths and doing the work of judgment, in order to resolve our sinful nature, to allow us to fully cast off the bonds and constraints of sin, be cleansed, and to deliver us into God’s kingdom. This fulfills the Lord Jesus’ prophecies: **‘I have yet many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. However, when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth’** (John 16:12–13). **‘I came not to judge the world, but to save the world. He that rejects Me, and accepts not My words, has one that judges him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day’** (John 12:47–48). In the last days, Almighty God has uttered

millions of words, expressing all the truths necessary to purify and fully save mankind. He judges and exposes all of our corrupt dispositions and satanic nature that are in opposition to God, fully exposing the root of our sinfulness and resistance to God. He also points us toward the path of casting off sin and gaining God's salvation. The only way to see the truth of our corruption is to accept the judgment and chastisement of God's words, then we can feel remorse, hate ourselves, and repent to God, be freed from corruption and cleansed. God's work of judgment in the last days is our only path to be purified, saved, and enter the kingdom of heaven." Hearing this brother's fellowship was so enlightening, like a great weight had been lifted from my shoulders. It turns out that the Lord Jesus did the work of redemption and man was merely forgiven of their sins through Him as the sin offering, but the sinful nature within them still remained. Accepting God's judgment work of the last days was the only way to resolve the issue of sin, to escape the bonds and constraints of sin, be cleansed, and be worthy to enter God's kingdom. Only God Himself could unlock the mysteries of His management work, and only God could fully cleanse and save mankind. I felt certain that this was the work of God—I was thrilled.

The next day, a sister from The Church of Almighty God read me a passage of God's words: **"Christ of the last days uses a variety of truths to teach man, to expose the substance of man, and to dissect the words and deeds of man. These words comprise various truths, such as man's duty, how man should submit to God, how man should be loyal to God, how man ought to live out normal humanity, as well as the wisdom and the disposition of God, and so on. These words are all directed at the substance of man and his corrupt disposition. In particular, the words that expose how man spurns God are spoken in regard to how man is an embodiment of Satan, and an enemy force against God. In**

undertaking His work of judgment, God does not simply make clear the nature of man with a few words; He exposes and prunes over the long term. All these different methods of exposure and pruning cannot be substituted with ordinary words, but with the truth of which man is utterly bereft. Only methods such as these can be called judgment; only through judgment of this kind can man be subdued and thoroughly convinced about God, and moreover gain true knowledge of God. What the work of judgment brings about is man's understanding of the true face of God and the truth about his own rebelliousness. The work of judgment allows man to gain much understanding of the intentions of God, of the purpose of God's work, and of the mysteries that are incomprehensible to him. It also allows man to recognize and know his corrupt essence and the roots of his corruption, as well as to discover the ugliness of man. These effects are all brought about by the work of judgment, for the essence of this work is actually the work of opening up the truth, the way, and the life of God to all those who have faith in Him" (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. Christ Does the Work of Judgment With the Truth).

After reading this, she shared fellowship and testimony with me that gave me more clarity. In the last days, God is expressing truths and doing the work of judgment to resolve man's sinful nature. If we don't accept God's judgment, but spend our whole life within religion, we won't escape sin and be cleansed. Thanks to God's mercy and grace, I finally found the path to being cleansed of sin. I was so excited, I just couldn't hold my tears back. I thought back over the last eight years, about how I'd gone to countless churches, large and small, searching for the path to be rid of sin and enter the kingdom of heaven. But every time, I went with hope, and came back with disappointment. It was God's grace that allowed me to hear His voice and see His appearance. I was incredibly blessed! I felt like a lost

child who finally returned to her mother after years of wandering. I felt a sense of peace and joy that was indescribable.

However, I still had some confusion that hadn't been resolved. I asked this sister, "Chinese people are of poor caliber and are against God. Why would God appear and work there in the last days?" She read a passage of Almighty God's words for me: **"The work of Jehovah was the creation of the world, it was the beginning; this stage of work is the end of work, and it is the conclusion. At the start, God's work was carried out among the chosen ones of Israel, and it was the dawn of a new epoch in the most holy of all places. The last stage of work is carried out in the most impure of all countries, to judge the world and bring the age to an end. In the first stage, God's work was done in the brightest of all places, and the last stage is carried out in the darkest of all places, and this darkness will be driven out, the light brought forth, and all the people conquered. When the people of this most impure and darkest of all places have been conquered, and the entire population has acknowledged that there is a God, who is the true God, and every person has been utterly convinced, then this fact will be used to carry out the work of conquest throughout the entire universe. This stage of work is symbolic: Once the work of this age has been finished, the work of six thousand years of management will come to a complete end. Once those in the darkest of all places have been conquered, it goes without saying that it will also be so everywhere else. As such, only the work of conquest in China carries meaningful symbolism. China embodies all forces of darkness, and the people of China represent all those who are of the flesh, of Satan, and of flesh and blood. It is the Chinese people who have been most corrupted by the great red dragon, who have the strongest opposition to God, whose humanity is most base and impure,**

and so they are the archetype of all corrupt humanity. This is not to say that other countries have no problems at all; the notions of man are all the same, and although the people of these countries may be of good caliber, if they do not know God, then it must be that they oppose Him. ... It is in the people of China that corruption, impurity, unrighteousness, opposition, and rebelliousness are manifested most completely and revealed in all their varied forms. On the one hand, they are of poor caliber, and on the other, their lives and mindset are backward, and their habits, social environment, family of birth—all are poor and the most backward. Their status, too, is low. The work in this place is symbolic, and after this test work has been carried out in its entirety, God's subsequent work will be much easier. If this step of work can be completed, then the subsequent work goes without saying. Once this step of work has been accomplished, great success will have been fully achieved, and the work of conquest throughout the entire universe will have come to a complete end. In fact, once the work among you has been successful, this will be equivalent to the success throughout the entire universe. This is the significance of why I have you act as a model and a specimen" (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. The Vision of God's Work (2)). Then she fellowshiped, "God's words are very clear. It's most meaningful for God to appear and work in China in the last days. God's work now is the work of judgment and purification. He is expressing truths to expose man's anti-God, satanic nature and our various corrupt dispositions. He is showing us His righteous, majestic, and wrathful disposition that brooks no offense. That's why He had to choose people that were most deeply corrupted and against God to make them as typical examples. Working among these people is the only way to reveal every type of corruption within humanity and better show His holiness and

righteousness. That is how He can achieve the best results in His judgment work. Also, China is the lair of the great red dragon, and the Chinese have been most profoundly corrupted by Satan. They deny and resist God the most, and have the worst humanity. The Chinese are the epitome of corrupt humanity. Thus, God appearing, working, expressing truths in China, and exposing every last bit of the Chinese people's corruption and rebelliousness can better conquer mankind. It can show more effectively the essence and truth of how deeply Satan has corrupted man. Also, by working in the filthiest, most corrupt, most anti-God country, by conquering, purifying, and transforming the deeply corrupt people of China who have the poorest caliber, the people of other countries will be easier to save. God working this way allows all of mankind to see God's great power and be fully convinced. This reveals God's authority and power as well as His wisdom and almightiness."

After that, she read more of God's words: **"Chinese people have never believed in God; they have never served Jehovah, and have never served Jesus. They just kowtow, burn incense, burn joss paper, and worship Buddha. They just worship idols—they are all rebellious to the extreme. So, the lower people's position is, the more it shows that what God gains from you is glory all the more. ... According to human notions, I would have to be born in a nice country to show that I am of high status, to show that I am of great worth, to show My honor, holiness, and greatness. If I had been born in a place that recognizes Me, in an elite family, and if I were of high position and status, then I would be treated very well. That would not benefit My work, and could such great salvation still be revealed then? All those who see Me would submit to Me, and they would not be polluted with filth. I should have been born in this kind of place. That is what you believe. But think**

about it: Did God come to the earth for enjoyment, or for work? If I worked in that kind of easy, comfortable place, could I gain My full glory? Would I be able to conquer all of the created beings? When God came to the earth, He was not of the world, and He did not become flesh in order to enjoy the world. The place where working would reveal His disposition and be most meaningful is the place where He was born. Whether it is a holy or a filthy land, and no matter where He works, He is holy. Everything in the world was created by Him, though it has all been corrupted by Satan. However, all things still belong to Him; they are all in His hands. He comes to a filthy land and works there in order to reveal His holiness; He only does this for the sake of His work, which means He endures great humiliation to do such work in order to save the people of this filthy land. This is done so as to bear witness, for the sake of all of mankind. What such work shows people is God's righteousness, and it is better able to display God's supremacy. His greatness and uprightness are manifested in the salvation of a group of lowly people whom others scorn. Being born in a filthy land does not at all prove that He is lowly; it simply allows all of the created beings to see His greatness and His true love for mankind. The more He does so, the more it reveals His pure love, His flawless love for man. God is holy and righteous, even though He was born in a filthy land, and even though He lives with those people who are full of filthiness, just as Jesus lived with sinners in the Age of Grace. Is every bit of His work not done for the sake of all mankind's survival? Is it all not so that mankind can gain great salvation? Two thousand years ago, He lived with sinners for a number of years. That was for the sake of redemption. Today, He is living with a group of filthy, lowly people. This is for the sake of salvation. Is all His work not for the sake of you

humans? If not to save mankind, why would He have lived and suffered with sinners for so many years after being born in a manger? And if not to save mankind, why would He return to the flesh a second time, born in this land where demons congregate, and live with these people who have been deeply corrupted by Satan? Is God not faithful? What part of His work has not been for mankind? What part has not been for your destiny? God is holy—this is immutable! He is unpolluted by filth, though He has come to a filthy land; all of this can only mean that God’s love for mankind is extremely selfless and the suffering and humiliation He endures is extremely great!” (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. The Significance of Saving the Descendants of Moab). Then she fellowshipped: “God’s words tell us that God becoming flesh in the last days, appearing and working in China carries tremendous significance. The Chinese are people who resist and hate God the most. They’re the most lacking in caliber and humanity, but God incarnated there, working in China, expressing the truth with incredible tolerance and patience. God has endured tremendous humiliation to save them, the filthiest and most corrupt people who are of lowest caliber. This further reveals how humble and hidden God is, and shows us His holiness and righteousness, His selfless, genuine love for mankind. On top of that, we can see that God is the Creator. He has the right to do His work in any country, among any people, but no matter what country He appears and works in, His work is for all of humanity—it’s to save the entire human race. In the last days, Almighty God has appeared and is working in China, expressing truths. He has already made a group of overcomers, and now His gospel is expanding across the globe. Almighty God’s work and words are like a great light shining from the East to the West. More and more people are hearing God’s voice, turning toward Almighty God, accepting God’s cleansing and

salvation. If we follow our notions and imaginings, thinking that since God's previous two stages of work were in Israel, He is the God of the Israelites and He wouldn't appear and work in China, then isn't that delimiting Him? God said: **'My name shall be great among the Gentiles'** (Malachi 1:11). Then how would that be fulfilled? In the last days, God becoming flesh and working in China, where atheists rule, completely shatters human notions. It shows us that God isn't just the God of the Israelites, but He is also the God of the Gentiles. He is the God of all of humanity, and not just of a single country or a single people. God incarnating in China, appearing and working there, is incredibly meaningful!"

I felt really embarrassed and ashamed after hearing her fellowship. I didn't understand God's work, but just went along with the pastors in delimiting God, thinking He couldn't possibly work in China. How arrogant and ignorant of me! Just thinking about that is scary. Thanks to God's grace, I had the good fortune to hear His voice and accept His work of the last days. Otherwise, I'd still be delimiting God based on my own notions, condemning His appearance and work, and I'd have no hope of gaining His salvation. I'm grateful for God's salvation from the bottom of my heart! I've also personally experienced what the Lord Jesus said: **"And he that seeks finds; and to him that knocks it shall be opened"** (Matthew 7:8). These words are so real, and God is faithful. As long as we seek, God will lead and enlighten us. Thanks be to Almighty God!

30. So-called Self-knowledge

By Joseph, South Korea

After accepting God's work of the last days, I always gathered with brothers and sisters who had believed in God for a long time. When I saw that everyone could talk about the corruption they revealed when fellowshipping God's words, and they could check and reflect on themselves and dissect their corruption according to God's words, I became really envious and began to imitate them. Gradually, I also became able to check myself against God's words and acknowledge my corruption in gatherings. I thought that this was self-knowledge. Some brothers and sisters saw that I had only believed in God for two or three years, but when I talked about self-knowledge, I spoke in a way that was quite organized and profound, and they would give me looks of admiration. I felt very proud, thinking that I had good caliber and knew how to know myself and that if I continued pursuing this way, I wouldn't be far from a change in disposition and salvation. After that, I focused on putting effort into fellowshipping my self-knowledge, often citing God's stern words that exposed people to check myself to make others see that my understanding was deep and penetrating, and that my life entry was better than others'. I never reflected on whether this way of understanding was correct, and it wasn't until later, after I had been pruned several times, that I realized my self-knowledge was all fake.

In November 2020, I was reviewing videos made by some brothers and sisters with two other sisters. During that time, a lot of videos were submitted and the brothers and sisters raised many issues, and there were some of them that I didn't know how to resolve. At that point, my perfunctory attitude surfaced. I thought, "I'm responsible for several

groups, so I'm quite busy and still have some videos piled up that need to be reviewed. If I carefully ponder and evaluate each video based on principles, and try to earnestly resolve each issue raised by the brothers and sisters, it'll take quite a bit of effort. How much free time would that leave me with? I'll just put some of the issues I can't see through to one side for now. Also, the two sisters cooperating with me are a bit slower in reviewing the videos, so if I check the videos quickly, won't I just be doing myself a disservice? I'll just keep to the same pace as everyone else. Besides, no one can do their duty perfectly. There are many truths I don't fully understand either. It's impossible to resolve every issue fully, so close enough is good enough." Thinking this, I didn't put much effort into resolving some of the issues in the videos or the brothers' and sisters' confusions. Later on, I finished reviewing all the videos I had, and since I had reviewed more videos than the sisters cooperating with me, I felt somewhat self-satisfied and thought I was being pretty diligent and responsible in my duty. But some time later, the supervisor reviewed the videos we had submitted, found many principle-based issues, and wrote us a stern letter to prune us, "You've been doing this duty for so long, yet these basic issues of principle keep recurring. This really shouldn't be happening! It's not that you don't grasp the principles—this is more of a severe case of perfunctory behavior. You need to properly reflect on your attitude toward your duty!" Hearing the supervisor's harsh pruning, I felt wronged and resistant. I thought, "I've been putting in quite a bit of effort in my duty lately. Why aren't you mentioning anything positive about us and only focusing on exposing our problems? Besides, nobody can do their duty perfectly, and there are always shortfalls. We have shallow understanding of the truth and can't see through some issues, so it's normal that some of the videos we submitted have issues—why can't you understand that?" In my heart, I kept arguing back.

When chatting with the sisters I was cooperating with, I ended up expressing my views, intentionally or otherwise, saying, “The supervisor is too demanding. There’s no such thing as perfection. No matter how many times you check a video, there will still be issues....” Later, when I saw the two sisters writing about their reflections and knowledge, I realized that I had been completely resistant and wanted to argue back when pruned, and that this wasn’t self-knowledge at all! This pruning had come from God, and I had to accept it, reflect, and know myself. So I found relevant words of God to address my perfunctory state in my duty, and I pondered how I could write about my self-reflection more deeply. I quoted the more severe words of God that expose people’s perfunctoriness, saying such things like treating my duty carelessly was a serious betrayal of God, that being perfunctory in my duty indicated poor humanity, and that spreading fallacies to mislead people made me a rotten apple. After writing, I compared my reflections with those of the two sisters and I felt that my reflections were more profound. I felt quite pleased with myself, thinking that I could reflect on and know myself when pruned, that I could profoundly dissect myself in light of God’s words, and I believed I had learned a lesson. I also felt a bit proud, thinking the supervisor would surely feel, after reading my reflections, that I, as the team leader, had deeper understanding than the sisters I collaborated with, and that my life entry was better than theirs. Plus, I had written so negatively about myself, so the supervisor wouldn’t have much to say this time. But to my surprise, a few days later, I received another letter from the supervisor. This letter was even harsher than the one before, directly stating that my self-reflection and knowledge was superficial, that I didn’t truly know myself, and that my fallacious views had misled the sisters and caused everyone to neglect self-knowledge. It also said that the consequences of this were serious, and that I

had to reflect further. I found these harsh words of exposure hard to accept, thinking, “How is it that I haven’t truly known myself? I have been drawing on God’s words to reflect on and dissect my corruption, and my understanding is deeper than that of the sisters I work with. Isn’t this true self-knowledge? If the sisters don’t know themselves, how could it be that they were misled by me? I was just speaking casually—how was I misleading them?” For several days, I felt resistant and deeply wronged, believing the supervisor was targeting me and trying to make life difficult for me. I focused entirely on him and didn’t properly reflect on or know myself. My heart grew increasingly dark and dejected, I couldn’t calm my heart in my duty, and my prayers couldn’t find God. I realized that something was wrong with my state. At this point, I recalled the letter I had written to the supervisor. I had written this letter well, and admitted that I had spread negativity and led the sisters I worked with to side with me and become dissatisfied with the supervisor, and I’d also admitted that spreading fallacies and misleading people made me a rotten apple, but why was it that, when the supervisor exposed and pruned me like this, I was unable to accept it and felt so resistant? Didn’t this mean my previous understanding had been false? It hadn’t been true self-knowledge! I also realized that I had only forced myself to write some words to check and know myself to leave a good impression on the supervisor. Wasn’t this kind of self-knowledge false and deceptive? At this point, I gradually realized that I hadn’t truly accepted being pruned, that I didn’t really have any true self-knowledge, and that the darkness and dejection that I felt in my heart were because God was disgusted by what I had done and hiding His face from me. I came before God and prayed, asking Him to enlighten me to see the problems within myself clearly.

Later, I read two passages of God's words: "When some people fellowship their self-knowledge, the first thing out of their mouths is, 'I'm a devil, a living Satan, someone who resists God. I rebel against Him and betray Him; I'm a viper, an evil person who should be cursed.' Is this true self-knowledge? They only speak in generalities. Why do they not offer examples? Why do they not bring the shameful things they did out into the light of day for dissection? Some undiscerning people hear them and think, 'Now, that is true self-knowledge! To know themselves as a devil, and even to curse themselves—what heights they've reached!' Many people, new believers in particular, are prone to be misled by this talk. They think that the speaker is pure and has spiritual understanding, that this is someone who loves the truth, and is qualified for leadership. However, once they interact with them for a while, they find that this is not so, that the person is not whom they imagined, but is exceptionally false and deceitful, skilled at disguise and pretension, which comes as a great disappointment. ... For instance, a person may know that they are deceitful, that they are full of petty schemes and plots, and they may also be able to tell when others reveal deceitfulness. So you should look to whether they truly repent and cast off their deceitfulness after admitting they are deceitful. And if they again reveal deceitfulness, look to whether they feel reproach and a sense of shame for having done so, to whether they are sincerely remorseful. If they have no sense of shame, much less repentance, then their self-knowledge is a cursory, slapdash thing. They are just going through the motions; theirs is not true knowledge. They do not feel that deceit is such an evil thing or that it is demonic, and they certainly do not feel what a shameless, vile behavior deceit is. They think, 'People are all deceitful. The only ones

who aren't are fools. A bit of deceit doesn't make you a bad person. I haven't done evil; I'm not the most deceitful person out there.' Can such a person truly know themselves? They most certainly cannot. This is because they have no knowledge of their deceitful disposition, they do not abhor deceit, and everything they say about self-knowledge is pretense and empty talk. Not recognizing one's own corrupt dispositions is not true self-knowledge. The reason that deceitful people cannot truly know themselves is that for them, it is no easy thing to accept the truth. So, no matter how many words and doctrines they can spout, they will not truly change" (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. Only Self-Knowledge Is of Aid in Pursuing the Truth). **"How can one distinguish whether a person loves the truth? In one regard, one must look at whether this person can come to know themselves based on God's word, at whether they can reflect on themselves and feel true remorse; in another regard, one must look at whether they can accept and practice the truth. If they can accept and practice the truth, they are someone who loves the truth and who can submit to God's work. If they only recognize the truth, but never accept or practice it, as some people say, 'I understand all of the truth, but I can't practice it,' this proves they are not someone who loves the truth. Some people admit that God's word is the truth and that they have corrupt dispositions, and also say that they are willing to repent and remake themselves anew, but after that, there is no change at all. Their words and actions are still the same as before. When they talk about knowing themselves, it is as if they are telling a joke or shouting a slogan. They do not reflect or come to know themselves in the depths of their hearts at all; the key issue is that they have no attitude of remorse. Less still are they opening up about their corruption candidly in order to genuinely self-reflect.**

Rather, they are pretending to know themselves by going through the process and the motions of doing so. They are not people who genuinely know themselves or accept the truth. When such people talk about knowing themselves, they are going through the motions; they are engaging in disguise and fraud, and false spirituality. Some people are deceitful, and when they see others fellowshipping their self-knowledge, they think, ‘Everyone else opens up and dissects their own deceit. If I don’t say anything, everyone will think I don’t know myself. I’ll have to go through the motions, then!’ After which, they describe their own deceit as gravely serious, illustrating it in dramatic fashion, and their self-knowledge seems especially profound. Everyone who hears feels they truly know themselves, and thereupon looks upon them with envy, which in turn makes them feel as if they are glorious, as if they’ve just adorned themselves with a halo. This manner of self-knowledge achieved by going through the motions, coupled with their disguise and fraud, misleads others” (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. Only Self-Knowledge Is of Aid in Pursuing the Truth).

Through the exposure of God’s words, and checking myself against it, I realized that my self-knowledge was nothing but hypocrisy and deceit. My self-knowledge had just been for show to please my supervisor. I thought he had pointed out our issues, saying we were irresponsible and perfunctory in our duties, and with the sisters I was working with all reflecting on themselves, if I didn’t know myself, it would seem like I wasn’t accepting being pruned. If my reflection as the team leader was shallower than others’, wouldn’t that make it seem like my life entry was poor? With this intention, I reluctantly wrote some words of reflection and self-knowledge, but this wasn’t genuine knowledge from the heart, nor was it real understanding from accepting the judgment and chastisement of God’s words. I didn’t feel any sense of pain or

indebtedness. It was just for others to see, like I was just chanting slogans and bombast. I verbally recognized my perfunctory attitude, but in my heart, I didn't really believe it. I even thought, "It's no big deal if there are some problems or deviations in my duty. Who can do their duty without any issues? The supervisor is just seizing on a small problem in my duty to prune and reprimand me. He's being too demanding!" I was also spreading discontent against the supervisor behind his back. In what way was this real self-knowledge? What's worse was that even though I clearly didn't accept the supervisor's pruning inwardly, I acted as if I did, applying to myself God's words of exposing people's perfunctoriness. I saw that my internal and external states were at odds, deceiving others and giving them a false impression. I was truly deceitful! It was only through the revelation of facts that I became fully convinced. I truly had no real understanding of myself. My self-knowledge was simply formal and empty words, nothing more than pretense and deceit. No matter how deep or thorough my reflection seemed, it was all just phony and fake. Realizing this, I finally came to my senses. In all these years of believing in God, I had always talked about self-knowledge and dissected myself during gatherings, but even with all this knowledge, there still hadn't been much change. My self-knowledge had only been to gain others' admiration and praise, to flaunt my so-called good life entry, and even to secretly compare my fellowship and knowledge in gatherings with that of my sisters', to see who had the deeper and more thorough understanding. My self-knowledge was just on paper, and although I was full of grand slogans and I exposed myself harshly, sometimes even saying I was a devil, a Satan, and an antichrist, this wasn't truly accepting the judgment of God's words, and it didn't come from the heart. Instead, I was just lifting quotes from God's words to speak grand doctrines that sounded profound, but were actually empty without much

real understanding of my corrupt state. This kind of self-knowledge deceived others and blinded me. I always thought that by admitting my corruption and checking myself against what God's words expose about humans' corrupt essence, I was truly knowing myself, and I even admired myself for it. But in reality, I couldn't even accept one correct opinion, and when pruned, I would argue back and try to justify myself. If I carried on like this, even if I believed in God my whole life and talked about self-knowledge every day, I still wouldn't achieve genuine repentance or change, and in the end, my satanic disposition would remain unchanged, and I would certainly be abandoned and eliminated by God. Realizing this, I saw just how foolish I was and how much danger I was in!

Later, I read another passage of God's words: **"Some antichrists are particularly adept at pretending, cheating people, and putting up a facade. When they encounter people who understand the truth, they start talking about their self-knowledge, and also say that they are a devil and a Satan, that their humanity is bad, and that they deserve to be cursed. Suppose that you ask them, 'Since you say that you are a devil and a Satan, what evil deeds did you commit?' They will say: 'I didn't do anything, but I am a devil. And I'm not only a devil; I'm also a Satan!' You then ask them, 'Since you say that you are a devil and a Satan, which evil acts of a devil and a Satan did you commit, and how did you resist God? Can you tell the truth about the evil things that you did?' They will say: 'I didn't do anything evil!' You then press further and ask, 'If you have not done anything evil, then why do you say that you are a devil and a Satan? What are you trying to achieve by saying this?' When you get serious with them like this, they will have nothing to say. Actually, they have done many bad things, but they absolutely will not share the facts about this with you. They will just talk some big**

talk and spout some doctrines to speak of their self-knowledge in a hollow way. When it comes to how they specifically drew people in, cheated people, made use of people based on their feelings, failed to take the interests of God's house seriously, went against the work arrangements, cheated the Above, concealed things from the brothers and sisters, and how much they damaged the interests of God's house, they won't say a single word about these facts. Is this true knowledge of oneself? (No.) In saying that they are a devil and a Satan, are they not feigning self-knowledge in order to exalt and testify about themselves? Is this not a method they use? (It is.) The average person cannot see through this method. ... Satan sometimes misleads people by exalting and testifying about itself, and sometimes it can admit to its mistakes in a roundabout way when it has no other choice, but it is all a facade, and its aim is to gain people's sympathy and understanding. It will even say, 'No one is perfect. Everyone has corrupt dispositions and everybody is capable of making mistakes. As long as one can correct their mistakes, they are a good person.' When people hear this, they feel that it is right, and continue to worship and follow Satan. Satan's method is to proactively acknowledge its mistakes, and covertly exalt itself and raise its position in people's hearts, so that people accept everything about it—even its errors—and then forgive these errors, gradually forget about them, and eventually accept Satan completely, becoming loyal to it unto death, never leaving or abandoning it, and following it until the end. Is this not Satan's method of doing things? This is how Satan acts, and antichrists also use this kind of method when they act in order to fulfill their ambitions and aims of having people worship and follow them. The consequences that this leads to are the same, and not at all different to the consequences of Satan misleading and corrupting

people” (The Word, Vol. 4. Exposing Antichrists. Item Four: They Exalt and Testify About Themselves). Reflecting on myself, I was exactly as God had exposed. When I was pruned, I was clearly arguing back and refusing to submit inside, but to make others say I could accept the truth, and to replace the supervisor’s negative impression of me with a good one instead, I dissected and knew my problems without hesitation and I used some harsh words to check myself, saying I was “lacking humanity,” “misleading others,” and “disturbing and disrupting church work,” to make others think I understood myself deeply and thoroughly. In truth, I was taking one step back to take two steps forward, using my immediate admission of fault to silence others and make everyone endorse me, admire me, and say that I could accept the truth, had life entry, and corrected my mistakes once I knew of them. I used appearances and empty doctrine to package myself, when really, I just wanted to show off, exalt myself, and deceive others. I saw that my knowledge hid many shameful motives and schemes intended to whitewash myself, mislead others, and make them admire me. I was truly disgusting! Moreover, I didn’t actually think my problems were that serious, but I described myself as hideous and despicable. In essence, what I was doing was bearing false witness to mislead others. It was only through this revelation that I saw just how deceitful my nature truly was that I could even fake and counterfeit my self-knowledge. The supervisor’s exposure and pruning were absolutely right!

Later, I read a passage of God’s words, and gained some understanding of the wrong path I’d been taking. Almighty God says: **“Among those who seek life, Paul was someone who did not know his own substance. He was by no means humble or submissive, nor did he know his essence, which was in opposition to God. And so, he was someone who had not undergone detailed experiences, and was someone who did not put the**

truth into practice. Peter was different. He knew his imperfections, weaknesses, and his corrupt disposition as a created being, and so he had a path of practice through which to change his disposition; he was not one of those who only had doctrine but possessed no reality. Those who change are new people who have been saved, they are those who are qualified in pursuing the truth. People who do not change belong to those who are naturally obsolete; they are those who have not been saved, that is, those who are spurned by God. They will not be remembered by God no matter how great their work. When you compare this with your own pursuit, whether you are ultimately the same kind of person as Peter or Paul should be self-evident. If there is still no truth in what you seek, and if even today you are still as arrogant and insolent as Paul, and are still as glib and boastful as him, then you are without doubt a degenerate who fails. If you seek the same as Peter, if you seek practices and true changes, and are not arrogant or willful, but seek to perform your duty, then you will be a created being who can achieve victory. Paul did not know his own essence or corruption, much less did he know his own rebelliousness. He never mentioned his despicable defiance of Christ, nor was he overly regretful. He only offered a brief explanation and, deep down in his heart, he did not completely yield to God. Though he fell on the road to Damascus, he did not look deep within himself. He was content merely to keep working, and he did not consider knowing himself and changing his old disposition to be the most crucial of issues. He was satisfied with merely speaking the truth, with providing to others as a salve for his own conscience, and with no longer persecuting Jesus' disciples to console himself and forgive himself for his past sins. The goal that he pursued was nothing more than a future crown and

transitory work, the goal he pursued was abundant grace. He did not seek sufficient truth, nor did he seek to progress deeper into the truth which he had previously not understood. His knowledge of himself can therefore be said to be false, and he did not accept chastisement or judgment. That he was able to work does not mean he possessed a knowledge of his own nature or essence; his focus was on outward practices only. What he strived for, moreover, was not change, but knowledge. His work was completely the result of the appearance of Jesus on the road to Damascus. It was not something he had resolved to do originally, nor was it work that occurred after he had accepted the pruning of his old disposition. No matter how he worked, his old disposition did not change, and so his work did not atone for his past sins but merely played a certain role among the churches of the time. For someone such as this, whose old disposition did not change—that is to say, who did not gain salvation, and was even more without the truth—he was absolutely incapable of becoming one of those accepted by the Lord Jesus” (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. Success or Failure Depends on the Path That Man Walks). God’s words expose the paths Peter and Paul took. Peter’s success in believing in God lay in his earnest pursuit of truth and focus on self-knowledge. He rigorously checked himself against the words of the Lord Jesus that exposed humanity, reflected on himself in light of God’s words, and eventually gained true self-knowledge. Paul’s failure was due to his lack of knowledge of his corrupt essence. He was content with merely verbal recognition, calling himself a sinner and the chief of sinners. But he never dissected or laid bare how he rebelled against and resisted the Lord Jesus, or what evil he committed. His self-knowledge was empty and false. Not only did this fail to bring him a change in life disposition, but it made him even more arrogant, and in the end, he brazenly testified to

himself, saying that he was living as Christ. Through the exposure of God's words, I realized that I was walking the same path as Paul. In all these years of believing in God, I had spoken about self-knowledge in gatherings and before brothers and sisters, saying I was arrogant, selfish, vile, and lacking humanity, even claiming to be a devil and a Satan, with words of self-knowledge flowing easily from my mouth, and no matter which aspect of my corrupt disposition I was recognizing, I could speak on it for ten to twenty minutes. But in my heart, I didn't feel any pain or distress. I couldn't help but ask myself, "With all this self-knowledge, in all these years, have I truly accepted any of God's words of judgment? Have I truly come to hate myself? What aspect of my corrupt disposition has really changed?" Every time in gatherings or when others exposed me, I would discuss some doctrinal knowledge to just go through the motions, but I'd feel no sense of guilt or indebtedness in my heart, and afterward, I'd never think about how to pursue change. The more I recognized myself this way, the more negligent I became and I lost my motivation to progress in my duties. My self-knowledge didn't bring about any change in me at all. Instead, it made me self-satisfied and self-admiring. I thought that I had acknowledged my perfunctoriness, selfishness, and despicableness, and that I had recognized my lack of humanity. I even thought my understanding was deeper and more thorough than others' and that this meant I had entered into the truth. Such hypocritical self-knowledge not only deceived others but also misled me, and in the end, I was the one who suffered a loss. In fact, some brothers and sisters discerned this so-called self-knowledge of mine. One brother even said to me, "The self-knowledge you talk about seems grand and beyond the reach of most people, and at first, I admired it, but over time, I didn't see you attain much change or entry!" On reflection, it's really pitiful! Over the years, while doing my duties, God arranged many

environments for me and I also faced a lot of pruning, but I let all these opportunities slip away and I didn't properly reflect on or know myself in these matters. God has expressed so many words, exposing all aspects of human corrupt dispositions with the hope that people can truly accept the judgment of His words, cast off their corrupt dispositions, and achieve salvation. But I just used the literal words of God as a tool to show off, equipping myself with a heap of doctrine, but didn't change my corrupt disposition at all. I was just like the hypocritical Pharisees. Thinking of this, I felt a sense of crisis, and realized I couldn't continue like this, so I prayed to God, asking Him to guide me to correct my wrong pursuits and truly know myself.

Through prayer and seeking, I found a path of practice and entry in God's words. God's words say: **"If your self-knowledge only involves the cursory recognition of superficial things—if you merely say that you are arrogant and self-righteous, that you rebel against and resist God—then this is not true knowledge, but doctrine. You must integrate the facts into this: You must bring to light whichever matters you hold mistaken intents and views or distorted opinions on for fellowship and dissection. Only this is truly knowing oneself. You should not gain an understanding of yourself based on your actions alone; you must grasp what is key and resolve the root of the problem. Once a period of time has gone by, you must reflect on yourself and summarize which problems you have resolved, and which still remain. So, too, must you seek the truth to solve these problems. You must not be passive, you must not always need others to coax you or push you to do things, or to even lead you by the nose; you must have your own path for life entry. You must frequently examine yourself to see what things you have said and done that are at odds with the truth, which of your intents are**

wrong, and what corrupt dispositions you have revealed. If you always practice and enter in this way—if you make strict demands of yourself—then you will gradually be able to understand the truth, and have life entry. When you genuinely understand the truth, you will see that you really are nothing. For one thing, you have a seriously corrupt disposition; for another, you lack too much, and you do not understand any truths. If a day comes when you truly possess such self-knowledge, you will no longer be capable of arrogance, and in many matters you will possess sense, and be capable of submission. What is the key issue right now? Through fellowship and dissection on the essence of notions, people have come to understand the reason that they form notions; they are able to resolve some notions, but this does not mean that they can see clearly the essence of every notion, it just means that they have some self-knowledge, but their knowledge is not yet deep enough or clear enough. In other words, they still cannot see their own nature essence clearly, nor can they see what corrupt dispositions have taken root in their hearts. There is a limit to how much a person can gain knowledge of themselves in this way. Some people say, ‘I’m aware that my disposition is extremely arrogant—does this not mean I know myself?’ Such knowledge is too superficial; it cannot solve the problem. If you truly know yourself, then why are you still seeking personal advancement, why do you still crave status and distinction? This means that your arrogant nature has not been eradicated. Therefore, change must start from your thoughts and views and the intents behind your words and actions” (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. How Man Crosses Into the New Age). After reading God’s words, I gained some clarity on the path to self-knowledge. I reflected on and recognized myself regarding this matter, asking myself, “Why was I so perfunctory in my duty? Why

was I unwilling to accept it when the supervisor exposed and pruned me for my irresponsibility? What intentions and viewpoints were driving this?” In my reflection, I realized this: On one hand, I considered my flesh too much, and I just wanted to slack off whenever I needed to endure fleshly suffering. Moreover, I had the despicable thought that since the duty was shared among three people, if I reviewed more, put in more effort, or suffered more than my sisters, I’d be a fool and doing myself a disservice. I treated my duty like I was working for an employer, always calculating my gains and losses and feeling shortchanged if I did a bit more work or suffered a bit more than others. It looked like I was doing my duty, but in reality, I was full of wicked schemes and only thinking of my own benefit. I was so selfish and despicable! What’s more, I found that I had another wrong viewpoint, which was that I believed no one was perfect, that no one could do their duty perfectly, and that having some problems or deviations was normal, so when I was pruned, I didn’t reflect on or know myself, and just thought the supervisor was being too demanding instead. When I truly reflected on and dissected myself, I realized that this viewpoint didn’t conform to the truth. Although God doesn’t require us to do our duties perfectly, He does hope that we can give it our all in our duties. This is the principle we should adhere to in our duties. But I held to erroneous viewpoints and was unwilling to put in effort even when a bit more attention could prevent problems. I wasn’t trying my best, let alone was I putting my heart into it. This led to more and more issues emerging in my duty, directly hindering and causing losses to my duty. Upon realizing this, I was able to understand a little about my inner state.

Just as I was gaining some understanding, the supervisor came to hold a gathering with us, asking us how we had understood our being pruned and revealed recently. I began organizing what I was going to say in my head,

wondering, “How can I speak so that the supervisor will think I have self-knowledge? How can I make it seem that I have a deep understanding? If my understanding seems too shallow, will the supervisor and my partnered sisters look down on me for having poor life entry?” When I thought this way, I immediately realized, “Aren’t I still trying to disguise myself with profound doctrines to gain admiration from others?” I knew this was an opportunity God had set up for me to practice the truth and be an honest person, so I prayed to God in my heart, resolving that regardless of how the brothers and sisters saw me, I had to speak the truth from my heart and share as much as I understood. After that, I fellowshiped my behavior of packaging myself and of misleading others, and the intentions behind it. I also confessed that at that moment, I only recognized that my previous understanding had been phony and fake, and I was aware of my intention to be perfunctory, but I hadn’t fully realized the nature and consequences of my perfunctoriness. After I expressed my true thoughts and understanding, I felt at ease in my heart, as if I had finally let others see my true self, and that I no longer needed to rack my brain to package myself. Later, I would often eat and drink God’s words of judgment and exposure regarding my perfunctory state in my duty, and I would reflect on and recognize my state and behavior. If I couldn’t understand something, I would seek from my brothers and sisters. Through everyone’s guidance and help, I gained some real understanding of myself, and my perfunctoriness decreased when I did my duty again. When I encountered problems and difficulties in my duty and didn’t know how to solve them, I would pray to God about these problems and rely on Him, seeking relevant truth principles, or I would fellowship with the sisters I was working with, or seek from the supervisor, striving to fully understand and clarify these issues. Although practicing this way took more time and effort and caused me to suffer a bit more than

usual, through seeking and fellowship, I came to understand some truths more clearly, problems were promptly resolved, and the effectiveness of the work gradually improved.

Through this experience, I found some paths of practice in relation to self-knowledge. I also realized that only by grasping my thoughts, intentions and revelations of corruption, and reflecting on and understanding them in light of God's words, could I gain the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit, see the nature of the problems, recognize my corrupt disposition and essence, truly hate myself, and be willing to repent and change. Applying labels to oneself, adhering to regulations, and hypocritically recognizing oneself, are things done to impress others and do not lead to genuine remorse or repentance. At most, these things result in regulation-following and self-restraint, but after a while, old problems will recur. It's like religious people who sin and then confess. No matter how many years they believe in God, they can't achieve a change in disposition. I realized how crucial it is to truly know oneself, as this directly relates to whether we can repent, change, and be saved. Looking back on my years of believing in God, I appeared to eat and drink God's words and do my duties every day, but I didn't truly accept the judgment or chastisement of God's words. If it hadn't been for this experience of being pruned, I'd still be living in my notions and imaginings, and not know myself. I thank God for arranging this situation to correct the deviations in my pursuit.

31. No Longer Being the “Expert” Is So Freeing

By Zhang Wei, China

I used to be the deputy chief in the orthopedics department of a hospital. For four decades I was totally dedicated to my work, and had extensive clinical experience. Patients and peers all acknowledged my medical expertise, and wherever I went I was looked up to and respected. I felt that I stood out from the crowd, and was a cut above other people. After accepting Almighty God’s work of the last days, I saw that some brothers and sisters served as church leaders and deacons, and often fellowshipped with others about the truth to help resolve problems. Some brothers and sisters were doing text-based work or producing videos. I really envied them, and felt that people must think highly of them for doing these duties. I looked down on hosting or handling general affairs, as I felt those duties were ordinary and anonymous. I thought, “I could never do that kind of duty. I have social standing and a good education. My duty has to match my identity and status.”

After Chinese New Year in 2020, a church leader said to me, “There are a few sisters doing text-based work who don’t have a safe place to stay. Your belief in God isn’t widely known, so your house should be relatively safe. Could you host these sisters?” I thought, “I’m willing to do my duty, but how can a dignified deputy chief like me, an expert in my field, be reduced to hosting brothers and sisters, dealing with pots and pans, and slaving over a hot stove every day? Isn’t that the same as being a nanny?” I wasn’t willing and thought, “Any duty is more dignified than hosting. Whatever you do, you have to arrange a duty for me that has status, or requires some skill. That way I won’t lose my dignity! Isn’t hosting the sisters a waste of my talent? If my friends and family knew that I gave up

my expert status just to stay home and cook for other people, wouldn't they laugh their heads off?" The more I thought about it, the more aggrieved I felt. But at that time, the church urgently needed a host house. So even though that duty wasn't to my liking, I couldn't refuse at such a critical time—that would show a lack of humanity. Later, it occurred to me that my stature was small, and I had little understanding of the truth. But if I was always interacting with these sisters who do text-based work, I could learn from them. Then maybe the church would arrange for me to do that duty, too. Hosting the sisters would be temporary. Besides, at that time the economic benefits of working at the hospital weren't very good, and I didn't want to go to work. So I resigned from my position, and readily assumed the hosting duty.

Previously, I had always been busy with work and rarely cooked. But to make sure the sisters enjoyed tasty meals, I threw myself into learning how to cook. But after cooking the food, I didn't want to take it out to the table, because I always felt that was a task of serving others. When I worked in the hospital, other people prepared meals for me, colleagues in every department would stand up to speak to me when I showed up, and I was valued wherever I went. But now, every day I was wearing an apron and oil-stained clothes and cleaning up greasy pots and pans, while the sisters wore clean clothes and sat in front of computers. I felt pain in my heart, and felt aggrieved, thinking, “‘Those who toil with their minds govern others, and those who toil with their hands are governed by others,’ and ‘Birds of a feather flock together.’ Cooking and being a host is physical work, and not on the same level as what the sisters were doing.” The more I thought about it, the worse I felt. It was like carrying a heavy burden that I couldn't put down, and I didn't want to do that duty long-term. I thought, “I've authored medical papers and been praised in my field, so my writing

skills can't be too bad. If I can write some good experiential testimony articles, perhaps the leader will see that I have talent, and arrange for me to do text-based work." So I started to get up early and stay up late to write experiential articles. The sisters read them and said that my writing was pretty good. I was delighted, and sent the articles off to the leader. I waited and waited, but the leader still didn't arrange for me to do text-based work. I was so disappointed, and gradually lost my enthusiasm for writing articles.

A few days later, I heard that the church needed personnel to produce videos, and thought, "Video production is a role that takes some skill. This is an opportunity, and if I can learn how to produce videos, I'll have a specialized skill." So I started to get up early and stay up late again, and worked to learn video production skills. But since I'm old, I couldn't work fast enough to keep up with the young people. So that hope was also dashed. I was discouraged. It seemed like I wasn't destined to get a more "high-level" duty, and was stuck doing physical labor. I felt like I was being snubbed, and for a few days I didn't eat or sleep well. I also kept forgetting what I was doing in the middle of cooking, and couldn't focus on anything. Sometimes I cut myself while slicing vegetables, or burned my hand. I kept dropping bowls and spoons and lids on the floor, making a terrible racket that startled me. When the sisters heard the commotion, they dropped whatever they were working on and rushed in to help me clean up. When I saw how I was impacting the sisters as they did their duty, I felt very guilty. In the midst of my misery, I prayed to God, "Oh God! Having to host these sisters always makes me feel inferior to other people. I feel wronged, and can't submit. I don't know how to get through this. Please guide me."

Later, I read a passage of God's words: **"Whatever your duty, do not discriminate between high and low. Suppose you say, 'Though this task is a commission from God and the work of God's house, if I do it,**

people might look down on me. Others get to do work that lets them stand out. I've been given this task, which doesn't let me stand out but makes me exert myself behind the scenes, it's unfair! I will not do this duty. My duty has to be one that makes me stand out in front of others and allows me to make a name for myself—and even if I don't make a name for myself or stand out, I still have to benefit from it and feel physically at ease.' Is this an acceptable attitude? Being picky is not accepting things from God; it is making choices according to your own preferences. This is not accepting your duty; it is a refusal of your duty, a manifestation of your rebelliousness against God. Such pickiness is adulterated with your individual preferences and desires. When you give consideration to your own benefit, your reputation, and so on, **your attitude toward your duty is not submissive**" (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. What Is the Adequate Performance of Duty?). What God's words exposed was a perfect reflection of my own state. I thought of myself as an expert with a high status who was valued and looked up to wherever I went. On that basis, I felt that I stood out from the crowd. When I was assigned to host the sisters, I felt like I lost my "expert" status, and that was an injustice. Through the judgment and exposure of God's words, I realized that the reason I looked down on hosting work so much was that I always viewed duties from the standpoint of a nonbeliever. I was looking at duties in terms of high or low, ranking them in a hierarchy. I was happy to do any duty that could bring me recognition and fame, but looked down on low-profile duties. Since I was bound by those perspectives, I did my duty reluctantly, and even considered giving it up altogether. I saw that in doing my duty, I didn't give the slightest consideration to God's intentions. It was clearly all about standing out from the crowd and pursuing reputation and status. It was God's grace that gave me an opportunity to do my duty, but I

was picking and choosing based on my own personal preferences. I truly lacked any sense of reason. When I realized that, I felt so indebted to God, and quietly resolved to put my mind at ease to try my best to do my duty.

After that, I consciously ate and drank God's words and prayed to Him about my state, and was able to settle down and host the sisters. But what happened next shook me up again. One of the sisters I was hosting was elected as a church leader. I really envied her and thought, "I can see that people who do text-based work are valued. They are well-regarded and stand out, and can even be a church leader. But look at me hosting sisters, what chance do I have to distinguish myself? Every day I wore an apron, and constantly smelled like oil and smoke from cooking. Every time I went out to stock up on food, I was afraid to be recognized by someone I knew, and asked why a good doctor with such great medical skills like me was not working. So every time I went out, I kept my head down, stayed close to the wall, and tried to slip by. When I got home, I could finally breathe a sigh of relief. In the past, on any occasion I would stand up front, and often go on stage to speak. And wherever I went, everyone would take the initiative to shake my hand. But now I didn't want anyone to see me, and when I bought vegetables, I felt like I was sneaking around." The more I thought about it the more I suffered inside. I couldn't help but think about my past glory in secular society, and I especially missed titles like "expert," "director," and "professor." I couldn't help but reminisce about the leaders who held me in high regard, colleagues who praised me, and patients who surrounded me with words of thanks, making me feel that I lived a decent and dignified life. I felt like I went from the top of the world to the bottom of the heap, and wondered when my current duty would end. I couldn't help but feel sad. I saw that the sisters were enjoying their meals, but I didn't feel like eating and soon lost quite a bit of weight. Then I received an unexpected

call from the hospital director inviting me to return to work. That knocked me off balance again, and I thought, “It would be better to go back to work, live the kind of life where people look up to me, and regain my prestige as an expert. But hosting is pretty important. I have to be at home and protect the sisters’ safety, and if I went back to work, I wouldn’t be able to do this duty.” I hurried to pray to God, “Oh God! I can’t let go of the status and glory of my past. Please guide me to know myself and submit.”

While I was seeking, I read a passage of God’s words: **“Think about it—how should you approach man’s worth, social status, and family background? What is the correct attitude you should have? First of all, you should see from God’s words how He approaches this matter; only in this way will you come to understand the truth and not do anything that goes against the truth. So, how does God regard someone’s family background, social status, the education they received, and the wealth they possess in society? If you don’t see things based on God’s words and cannot stand on God’s side and accept things from God, then the way you see things will certainly be a far cry from what God intends. If there is not much difference, with only a little discrepancy, then that’s not a problem; if the way you see things goes completely against what God intends, then it is at odds with the truth. As far as God is concerned, what He gives people and how much He gives is up to Him, and the status people have in society is also ordained by God and is absolutely not contrived by people themselves. If God causes someone to suffer pain and poverty, does that mean they have no hope of being saved? If they are of low worth and low social position, will God not save them? If they have a low status in society, are they then of low status in the eyes of God? Not necessarily. What does this depend on? It depends on the path this person walks, on what they pursue, and on**

their attitude toward the truth and God. If someone's social status is very low, their family is very poor, and they have a low level of education, yet they believe in God in a down-to-earth manner, and they love the truth and positive things, then in God's eyes do they have a high or low worth, are they valuable or worthless? They are valuable. Looking at it from this perspective, what does someone's worth—whether high or low, noble or lowly—depend on? It depends on how God sees you. If God sees you as someone who pursues the truth, then you have worth and are valuable—you are a valuable vessel. If God sees that you do not pursue the truth and you do not sincerely expend yourself for Him, then you are worthless and are not valuable—you are a lowly vessel. No matter how highly educated you are or how high your status in society is, if you don't pursue or understand the truth, then your worth can never be high; even if many people support you, praise you, and adore you, you are still a contemptible wretch. So, why does God see people this way? Why is such a 'noble' person, with such a high status in society, with so many people praising and admiring them, with even their prestige being so high, seen by God as lowly? Why is the way God sees people totally contrary to the views people have of others? Is God setting Himself against people on purpose? Absolutely not. It's because God is truth, God is righteousness, whereas man is corrupt and has no truth or righteousness, and God measures man by His own standard, and His standard for measuring man is the truth” (The Word, Vol. 4. Exposing Antichrists. Item Seven: They Are Wicked, Insidious, and Deceitful (Part One)). God's words brightened my heart. The root cause of my suffering was that I didn't see things based on God's words and the truth. Instead, I used Satan's point of view to rank duties as high or low, and a hierarchy of ranks, and used social status, reputation, education, and

professional accomplishments as standards for success. Dominated by these perspectives, I saw myself as a cut above and noble. I felt that I was an expert with status and a good position, that I stood out from the crowd, and was better than other people. Even after I came to believe in God, I kept that point of view. So I saw duties like leader and worker, and those that required high skills, as important. But hosting or handling general affairs to me were unimportant, and I felt that they were low-status positions that didn't match my social standing. When the leader wanted me to host the sisters, I couldn't submit. While doing my duty, I was missing my former prestige, so I couldn't eat or sleep well. I was in distress, and lost a lot of weight. It was unbearably painful. But through the exposure and judgment of God's words, I saw His righteousness. He is not concerned about whether someone's status is high or low, or their qualifications or educational attainments. God is concerned about whether people pursue the truth, and what path they're on. No matter how high their status, or how great their academic accomplishments and reputation, if they do not love the truth, and are averse to the truth, they are lowly in God's eyes. God values those who pursue and gain the truth, even if they have no status at all. I learned that no matter how many people support and praise me, and no matter how high my status is, if I cannot submit to God and do the duty of a created being, I am utterly worthless.

Later, I wondered about the reason why despite clearly knowing that I had the wrong point of view, but still couldn't help but pursue duties that were more prestigious and would make me stand out. While I was seeking, I saw a passage of God's words that said: **"Satan uses fame and gain to control man's thoughts, until all people can think of is fame and gain. They struggle for fame and gain, suffer hardships for fame and gain, endure humiliation for fame and gain, sacrifice everything they have**

for fame and gain, and they will make any judgment or decision for the sake of fame and gain. In this way, Satan binds people with invisible shackles, and they have neither the strength nor the courage to throw them off. They unknowingly bear these shackles and trudge ever onward with great difficulty. For the sake of this fame and gain, mankind shuns God and betrays Him and becomes increasingly wicked. In this way, therefore, one generation after another is destroyed in the midst of Satan's fame and gain" (The Word, Vol. 2. On

Knowing God. God Himself, the Unique VI). Through the exposure of God's words, I saw that Satan was victimizing and binding me through fame and gain, keeping a tight hold on me. Since I was young, I accepted the things instilled by my parents, taught in the schools, and imparted by secular society like "Man struggles upward; water flows downward," "A man leaves his name behind wherever he stays, just as a goose utters its cry wherever it flies," and "Those who toil with their minds govern others, and those who toil with their hands are governed by others." Very early, these satanic philosophies and fallacies had taken root in my heart. This led me to consider fame and gain as the correct goals in life, and feel that if I attained them, other people would think highly of me and support me. So whether it was at school, in society, or in the church, I valued rank and status. I worked hard to develop specialized skills, hoping to attain higher status and prestige within the group. I felt that was the only kind of life that would reflect the value of my existence. When I couldn't attain fame and status, I felt that the future looked bleak, miserable, and was apathetic about doing my duty. Status, fame, and gain were like shackles, constantly controlling me, so I couldn't help but shun and betray God. I also realized that although hosting the sisters seemed rather ordinary, that environment helped me to recognize that I had a fallacious view about what to pursue, and be able to

pursue the truth in doing my duty and cast off the fetters of fame and gain. Once I understood God's good intentions, I thanked Him from the bottom of my heart, and was filled with remorse. I prayed to Him, "Oh God, thank You for setting up this environment to reveal my misguided viewpoint of pursuit. I want to repent and stop pursuing status and reputation. I want to submit, and do my duty well." Then I politely declined the hospital's offer, and continued to stay at home and do my duty.

Afterward, I read two more passages of God's words: **"What kind of person does God want? Does He want a person of greatness, a celebrity, a noble person, or a world-shaking person? (No.) So, then, what kind of person does God want? (Someone with their feet planted firmly on the ground who fulfills the role of a created being.) Yes, and what else? (God wants an honest person who fears Him and shuns evil, and submits to Him.) (Someone who stands with God in all matters, who strives to love God.) Those answers are also correct. It is anyone who is of the same heart and mind as God"** (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. A Corrupt Disposition Can Only Be Resolved by Accepting the Truth). **"Ultimately, whether people can attain salvation is not dependent on what duty they do, but on whether they can understand and gain the truth, and on whether they can, in the end, entirely submit to God, put themselves at the mercy of His arrangement, give no consideration to their future and destiny, and become a qualified created being. God is righteous and holy, and these are the standards He uses to measure all mankind. These standards are immutable, and you must remember this. Inscribe these standards in your mind, and at any time, do not think of finding some other path to pursue some unreal thing. The requirements and standards God has for all who want to attain salvation are forever unchanging. They remain the same no matter who you are"** (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of

Christ of the Last Days. Part Three). I realized that God doesn't want people who are noble. He wants people who can fulfill the duty of a created being with their feet firmly on the ground. Although I had some identity and status in the secular world, my understanding of the truth was too shallow. Being a leader and worker, or doing text-based work requires an understanding of the truth, and can't be done with just having status, knowledge, and education. I should be reasonable, and do any duty that I was capable of. Since my home was suitable for hosting, I should host the sisters in a down-to-earth manner, and do my best to pursue the truth. That was the reason I should possess. No matter what duty we do, although the titles and tasks are different, a created being's identity and essence remain unchanged. I used to have an inflated opinion of myself, and thought I was so noble. I always saw myself as an expert and renowned physician, as if I was better than everyone else. I felt that hosting brothers and sisters had low status, and yearned for a more prestigious and prominent duty. I felt that the grass always looked greener on the other side, and couldn't stay grounded and do my duty well. In my heart, I even opposed God. I was arrogant to the point of being totally unreasonable. I thought of Job, who was the greatest of all the men of the East. He had high status and great renown, but he did not see himself in terms of status, or care about the prestige it gave him. Regardless of whether he had status or not, Job was able to fear and honor God as great. Job was rational. Although I can't compare to Job, I want to follow his example, and pursue being a qualified created being. Once I stopped pursuing fame, gain, and status, my attitude also changed. I saw that every duty is important and even indispensable. If no one acts as host, the brothers and sisters won't be able to have a suitable environment where they can feel at ease and do their duty. Thereafter, I made a conscious effort to rebel against myself, and dedicated my efforts to preparing good meals and

protecting the sisters' safety so they could do their duty in peace. Gradually, I no longer felt any status gap between us, and would silently sing hymns to myself while cooking. After my work was done, I would pray-read God's words, quiet my heart and ponder what I had gained through my experience, and then write my experiential articles. Every day, I lead a pretty fulfilling life. I feel this is a peaceful way to live, and my heart has been set free.

32. Learning From the Failures of Others

By Daisy, USA

In October 2022, two video work supervisors were dismissed. This was because our leader had repeatedly stressed the importance of this work but they never had any urgency. They just attended to general affairs and didn't resolve any problems, or actually participate in video production, which held back the work. The leader was very angry and said that people like them were slippery and irresponsible, disengaged from their work, and not suited to being supervisors, so he dismissed them immediately. I was shocked to hear this. I thought that they were doing their duty normally. Even if they were a little inefficient, passive, and didn't bear a burden, that wasn't such a big issue. Everyone was like that, to a certain degree. Did they really deserve to be dismissed for that? Later, the leader asked us how we usually did our duties: Were we pushing ourselves, giving it our all, and really working hard? Were we trying to be as efficient and productive as possible? Hearing these questions made me so nervous that I didn't dare raise my head. I knew that I wasn't even close to meeting those standards, and hearing the leader expose and dissect those supervisors as disengaged, irresponsible in their duties, and not having any urgency, made me even more nervous. I realized that I'd been doing my duty like that too. Not long before, the leader had arranged for me to follow up on the video work, and at first, I sought the principles, studied the relevant skills, and thought about how to get the work done quickly. But after a few days I started to think, "Video production is pretty complex. I've just started and there's much I'm still unfamiliar with; problems are unavoidable. I'll just do what I can. It'll end up being checked by the leader anyway. Even if there are problems, he'll understand." So I just did things in a routine way each day. I spoke of

the urgency of the work, but when the leader wasn't pressing us, our work efficiency decreased unknowingly. Work that could have been done in a week took twice as long, and I also stopped following up on the watering work I was responsible for. Sometimes I'd feel guilty, but I felt the work wasn't being delayed too much, so I didn't worry about it. Later, the leader put me in charge of other work, and I kept the same attitude. Though I looked busy on the outside, I didn't have any sense of urgency or solve many real problems. Sometimes I'd wonder, "I'm responsible for more work, so my schedule should be busier, I should have more things to worry about, and I should feel more stressed. Why don't I feel that way? I feel quite relaxed at the end of the day." I thought about planning out my time more wisely and tightening my schedule, so that I'd be more efficient and get more work done. But then I thought, "I'm already quite busy. Why ask so much of myself?" So I dropped the idea. I didn't feel any urgency in my duty until those two supervisors were dismissed. The leader had set two standards for our duties: We had to stretch ourselves and give it our all, and be as efficient and productive as possible. I was achieving neither of those. In my duty, I was mostly being slippery and perfunctory. I had no God-fearing heart, let alone loyalty. I felt gripped by an unspeakable fear. If the leader found out about my attitude, would I be the next one dismissed? If I didn't change my ways, I could be revealed any second. I came before God in prayer, "God, I've been so slippery in my duty lately. I'm afraid that one day I'll be revealed and eliminated. But what I feel more in my heart is fear and anxiety, and I don't have true knowledge or hatred of my corrupt disposition. Please guide me to know myself and amend my incorrect state."

Later on, I wondered, "Why have the dismissals of those supervisors made me so afraid and guarded against God?" I realized it was partly

because I couldn't see through to the essence of their problems. I thought their issues weren't that serious, so I wasn't able to truly accept what happened to them. I found the relevant words of God for this issue. God's word says: **"All God's chosen people are now practicing performing their duties, and God makes use of people's performance of their duties to perfect one group of people and eliminate another. So, it is the performance of duty that reveals each sort of person, and each sort of deceitful person, disbeliever, and evil person is revealed and eliminated in the performance of their duty. Those who perform their duties loyally are honest people; those who are consistently perfunctory are deceitful, shrewd people, and they are disbelievers; and those who cause disruptions and disturbances in performing their duties are evil people and antichrists. Right now, a wide range of problems still exist in many of those who perform duties. Some people are always very passive in their duties, always sitting and waiting and relying on others. What sort of attitude is that? It is irresponsibility. God's house has arranged for you to do a duty, yet you ponder on it for days without getting any concrete work done. You are nowhere to be seen at the workplace, and people cannot find you when they have problems that need resolving. You do not bear a burden for this work. If a leader inquires about the work, what will you tell them? You are not doing any kind of work right now. You are well aware that this work is your responsibility, but you do not do it. What on earth are you thinking? Do you not do any work because you are incapable of it? Or are you just greedy for comfort? What attitude do you have toward your duty? You only talk about words and doctrines, and you only say pleasant-sounding things, but you do not do any actual work. If you do not wish to perform your duty, you should resign. Do not hold your position and**

not do anything there. Is doing so not inflicting harm on God's chosen people and compromising the work of the church? In the way you talk, you seem to understand all manner of doctrine, but when asked to perform a duty, you are perfunctory, and not conscientious in the least. Is that expending yourself sincerely for God? You are not sincere when it comes to God, yet you feign sincerity. Are you capable of deceiving Him? In the way you usually talk, there seems to be such great faith; you would like to be the pillar of the church and its rock. But when you perform a duty, you are less useful than a matchstick. Is this not deceiving God with your eyes wide open? Do you know what will come of you trying to deceive God? He will spurn and eliminate you! All people are revealed in performing their duties—just set a person to a duty, and it will not take long before it is revealed whether they are an honest person or a deceitful person, and whether or not they are a lover of the truth” (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. Only an Honest

Person Can Live Out True Human Likeness). God's word made it clear: Those who are always perfunctory and slippery in their duties, and satisfied with just scrounging off the church with what little they do, are of poor humanity, slippery and deceitful by nature, and don't truly expend for God. In the end they are all eliminated by God. I thought back to those dismissed supervisors. They were in charge of such important work but only took on the post of “supervisor.” They had no burden in their hearts, and did their duties in a routine way each day without reviewing why their work was so inefficient, what problems others were having in their duties, or how they should be guiding or following up on work. The others kept reminding them to be more proactive, to plan the work wisely, and increase its efficiency. They promised to do so, but then didn't make any changes. They were passive and had to be pushed to do work. One of them in particular was

well-spoken, gifted, and had caliber, but after more than a month as supervisor, she still didn't know the basics of the work or how the team members were arranged. She was very perfunctory and irresponsible. I thought of how clearly God's word fellowshipped the responsibilities of leaders and how our leader had often spoken of the meaning and importance of doing our duties. They knew all this and were still perfunctory. They weren't people who loved or pursued the truth and they had no God-fearing hearts at all. I remembered that God said: **"If you do not take God's commissions seriously, then you are betraying Him in the most grievous way. In this, you are more lamentable than Judas, and should be cursed"** (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. How to Know Man's Nature). Before, I thought that only those who refused to do or gave up on their duties were betraying God, but from God's words I saw that when the church gives a person an important task, if they're sluggish, careless, always have a perfunctory attitude, and cause losses upon the work, then that's negligence and betrayal. It wasn't harsh of the leader to dismiss those supervisors. It was in line with God's word and the principles. I hadn't been able to accept it because I wasn't seeing people and things according to God's word, which made me guard against God. I was truly ignorant! I realized that my behavior was much like theirs, so I needed to reflect on the problems in my own duty quickly.

Later on, I found the words of God relating to my state and attitude toward duty to practice and enter into. God's word says: **"If you are not assiduous in reading God's words, and you do not understand the truth, then you cannot reflect on yourself; you will merely be satisfied with making a token effort and committing no evils or transgressions, and use this as capital. You will pass each day in a muddle, live in a state of confusion, merely do things on schedule, never use your heart**

to examine yourself or put effort into knowing yourself; you will always be perfunctory. In this way, you will never perform your duty to an acceptable standard. To put all your effort into something, you must first put all your heart into it; only when you first put all your heart into something can you put all your effort into it, and do your best. Today, there are those who have begun to be assiduous in performing their duty, they have begun to think about how to properly perform the duty of a created being in order to satisfy God's heart. They are not negative and lazy, they do not passively wait for the Above to issue orders, but take some initiative. Judging by your performance of your duty, you are a little more effective than before, and although it is still below standard, there has been a little growth—which is good. But you must not be satisfied with the status quo, you must keep searching, keep growing—only then will you perform your duty better, and reach an acceptable standard. However, when some people perform their duty, they never pull out all the stops and give it their all, they only give 50 to 60 percent of their effort, and just make do until what they are doing is done. They can never maintain a state of normalcy: When there's no one to keep an eye on them or offer support, they slacken off and lose heart; when there's someone to fellowship the truth, they perk up, but if the truth isn't fellowshipped to them for a while, they become indifferent. What is the problem when they always go back and forth like this? This is how people are when they haven't gained the truth, they all live by passion, which is incredibly difficult to maintain: They must have someone preach and fellowship to them every day; once there is no one to water and provide for them, and no one to support them, their hearts go cold again, they slacken once more. And when their hearts slacken, they become less effective in their duty; if they

work harder, effectiveness increases, their results in performing their duties are better, and they gain more” (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. In Believing in God, What Is Most Important Is to Practice and Experience His Words). From God’s word, I learned that we must take initiative to perform our duties adequately. We must be willing to work hard, suffer and pay a price. Also, we must do our best at everything we can, put our whole hearts into it, fulfill our responsibilities, and achieve results, and not just fool others or go through the motions. That’s doing a duty adequately. When the leader put me in charge of video work, at first, I wanted to get better at following up on the work, and really studied the skills and principles, but after doing it for a while, I found video work to be very difficult. I’d just started, there was still so much I didn’t know, and I needed to suffer and pay a price, so I started to slack off and my schedule was loose. Though I looked busy every day, I wasn’t working efficiently or getting that much real work done. I even had time to think about what I’d eat or drink, and when there was time, I’d take a rest, go out for a stroll, or have some fun. I had the title of supervisor, but I was more idle in my duty than the others. When I ran up against difficulties in work, I didn’t think to seek the principles or find someone who understood to help, I aimed for “good enough” and “more or less,” and then left the rest up to the leader to check. Because I was perfunctory and didn’t seek real results in my duty, the leader could always find problems in my work and it had to be sent back for revision, delaying our progress. I wasn’t putting all my effort into my duty, let alone all of my heart. I was doing it in a perfunctory, adulterated way, and I wasn’t truly paying a price. Even if I put in some effort, I didn’t get real results. How was that doing a duty? I was clearly fooling and deceiving God! I felt so guilty when I realized this. The church was training me as a supervisor, hoping that I’d be responsible and get the church work done

properly, but I was just slacking off. I was truly unconscionable. I was treating my duty like a nonbeliever working for a boss, and my performance wasn't even up to the standard of laboring. I recalled a passage of God's word: **"The standard God demands for the performance of your duty is that it is 'adequate.' What does it mean to be 'adequate'? It means to meet God's demands and satisfy Him. God must say it is adequate and it must receive His approval. Only then will the performance of your duty have been adequate. If God says it is not adequate, no matter how long you have been performing your duty, or how much of a price you have paid, it is not adequate. Then what will the result be? It will all be classified as laboring. Only a minority of laborers with loyal hearts will be spared. If they are not loyal in their laboring, then they do not have a hope of being spared. Speaking plainly, they will be destroyed in a disaster"** (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. What Is the Adequate Performance of Duty?). God's word made me realize I wasn't even achieving the most basic standard of conscience in my duty. This attitude was hated by God and made me unworthy of salvation. The dismissal of those two supervisors was a warning for me. I saw that those who are perfunctory and careless in their duties can't stand firm in the church. In the end, they are revealed and eliminated. Though I was doing a duty in the church, this didn't mean that I was doing it adequately. If I didn't amend my state as soon as possible, even if the church didn't eliminate me, I would be eliminated by God. That is decided by God's righteous disposition. Realizing this, I prayed to God, "God, I'm not paying a true price in my duty, I'm so perfunctory, and I have so many regrets. I now realize how dangerous my state is, and that I can't keep having this attitude toward my duty. I want to properly repent and do my duty as best I can."

After this, I wondered, “I know how important my responsibilities are, but I often can’t help but slack off and not want to pay a price in my duty. What is the reason for this?” I read God’s word: **“What kind of manifestations and characteristics do those who are excessively lazy display? Firstly, in whatever they are doing, they act perfunctorily, dawdle about, go at a leisurely pace, and rest and procrastinate whenever possible. Secondly, they pay no mind to the church’s work. To them, whoever likes worrying about such things may do so. They will not. When they do worry about something, it’s for the sake of their own fame, gain, and status—all that matters for them is that they are able to enjoy the benefits of status. Thirdly, they shy away from hardship in their work; they cannot accept their work being even slightly tiring, becoming very resentful if it is, and they are unable to bear hardship or pay a price. Fourthly, they are unable to persevere in whatever work they do, always giving up halfway and unable to see things through. If they’re momentarily in a good mood, they might do some work for fun, but if something requires long-term commitment, and it keeps them busy, requires a lot of thought, and fatigues their flesh, over time they will begin to grumble. For instance, some leaders are in charge of church work, and they find it new and fresh at first. They are very motivated in their fellowship of the truth and when they see brothers and sisters have problems, they are able to help and resolve them. But, after persisting for a while, they start to find the work of being a leader too exhausting, and they become negative—they wish to switch to an easier job, and are not willing to bear hardship. Such people lack perseverance. Fifthly, another characteristic that distinguishes lazy people is their unwillingness to do real work. As soon as their flesh suffers, they come up with excuses to evade and shirk**

their work, or pass it off to someone else. And when that person finishes the work, they shamelessly reap the rewards themselves. These are the five major characteristics of lazy people. You should check to see if there are such lazy people among the leaders and workers in the churches. If you find one, they should be dismissed immediately. Can lazy people do good work as leaders? No matter what kind of caliber they have or the quality of their humanity, if they are lazy, they will be unable to do their work well, and they will delay the work and important matters. The church's work is multifaceted; each aspect of it entails many detailed tasks and requires fellowshipping about the truth to resolve problems in order to be done well. Therefore, leaders and workers must be diligent—they have to do a lot of talking and a lot of work every day to ensure the work's effectiveness. If they speak or do too little, there will be no results. So, if a leader or worker is a lazy person, they are certainly a false leader and are incapable of doing real work. Lazy people do not do real work, much less go themselves to work sites, and they are not willing to resolve problems or involve themselves in any specific work. They do not have the slightest understanding or grasp of the problems in any work. They only have a superficial, vague idea in their heads from listening to what others have said, and they muddle through by just preaching a bit of doctrine. Are you able to discern this kind of leader? Are you able to tell that they are false leaders? (To a degree.) Lazy people are perfunctory in whatever duty they do. No matter the duty, they lack perseverance, work in fits and starts, and complain whenever they suffer some hardships, pouring out unending grievances. They hurl abuse at whoever criticizes or prunes them, like a shrew insulting people in the streets, always wanting to vent their anger at others, and not wanting to

do their duty. What does it show that they do not want to do their duty? It shows that they do not bear a burden, are unwilling to take on responsibility, and are lazy people. They do not want to suffer hardships or pay the price. This especially applies to leaders and workers: If they do not bear a burden, can they fulfill the responsibilities of leaders and workers? Absolutely not” (The Word, Vol. 5.

The Responsibilities of Leaders and Workers. The Responsibilities of Leaders and Workers (4)).

Pondering God’s word made me realize why I lacked perseverance in my duty, and why, after a brief burst of zeal, I no longer wanted to pay a price for it. It was mainly because I was so lazy and craved fleshly comfort too much. I didn’t seek efficiency in my work. If no leader pushed or pruned me, I lacked urgency. In particular, when I ran up against some issues in the work, I was very unwilling to expend mental energy on them, always indulging myself with the excuse that I’d just started, and pushing problems onto the leader. I would think to myself, “We should enjoy ourselves while we’re still alive. No matter how urgent the work is, we shouldn’t mistreat or overwork ourselves. So long as I’m not eliminated, I’m fine with just putting in a little effort and doing a little work.” I never sought to progress, which meant I improved very slowly. I thought about my brothers and sisters: Some of them put so much time and energy into finishing tasks, always focusing on their duties. Even when they’d finished their work, they kept pondering on if there were any deviations in it, and how they could do better. All they thought of was how to do their duties well. They did proper work, they had humanity, and were loyal to their duties. They easily gained the guidance of the Holy Spirit in their work, and over time they improved and made gains. However, I had been put in charge of video work by the church, but I had no conscience, my views on pursuit were like an animal’s. When I had time, I’d think about my fleshly desires and not about my duty

at all. I had a post, but I wasn't doing real work, which not only stopped us from getting good results, but also delayed the work. I was so selfish and despicable! If I carried on like that, I wouldn't be able to take on any work, I'd achieve nothing, and be bound to be eliminated by God. I came before God in prayer, "God, my scummy nature is too serious. I'm being irresponsible and slippery in such important work and I have no trace of a God-fearing heart. Before, I knew my scumminess was serious, but didn't truly hate it. I know this now. God, I want to change. I want to amend my attitude and views toward my duty, and do it properly. Please guide me to resolve my corrupt disposition and live out some human likeness."

I later recalled another passage of God's word that I'd read: **"You must at least be clear of conscience in doing your duty, and you must at least be worthy of your three meals a day and not be freeloading. This is called having a sense of responsibility. Whether your caliber is high or low, and whether or not you understand the truth, in any case, you must have this attitude: 'Since this work was given to me to do, I must treat it seriously, I must make it my concern, and I must use all my heart and strength to do it well. As for whether I can do it perfectly well, I can't presume to offer a guarantee, but my attitude is that I'll do my best to perform it well, and I certainly won't be perfunctory about it. If a problem arises in work, I should take responsibility then, and ensure I draw a lesson from it and do my duty well.' This is the right attitude. Do you have such an attitude? Some people say, 'I don't necessarily need to do a good job on the work I'm assigned. I'll just do what I can and the end product will be what it will be. I don't need to tire myself so much, or become wracked with anxiety if I do something wrong, and I don't need to take on so much stress. What's the point of making myself so tired? After all, I'm always working and I'm not**

freeloading.’ This kind of attitude toward one’s duty is irresponsible. ‘If I feel like working, I’ll do some work. I’ll do what I can and the end product will be what it will be. There’s no need to take it so seriously.’ Such people do not have a responsible attitude toward their duty and they lack a sense of responsibility. What kind of person are you? If you are the first kind of person, then you’re someone with reason and humanity. If you’re the second kind of person, then you’re no different from the kind of false leaders I’ve just dissected. You’re just idling your days away. ‘I’ll avoid fatigue and hardship and just enjoy myself more. Even if one day I’m dismissed, I won’t have lost anything. At least I’ll have enjoyed the benefits of status for a few days, it won’t be a loss for me. If I’m selected as a leader, that’s how I’ll act.’ What do you think of the mindset of this kind of person? Such people are disbelievers who do not pursue the truth in the slightest. If you truly have a sense of responsibility, then it shows that you have conscience and reason. No matter how large or small the task, no matter who assigns you that task, whether God’s house entrusts you with it or a church leader or worker assigns it to you, your attitude should be: ‘Since this duty has been assigned to me, it is God’s exaltation and grace. I should do it well according to the truth principles. Despite having average caliber, I’m willing to take on this responsibility and give it all I have to do it well. If I do a poor job, I should take responsibility for it, and if I do a good job, this isn’t a credit to me. This is what I ought to do.’ Why do I say that how one treats one’s duty is a matter of principle? If you really have a sense of responsibility and are a responsible person, then you will be able to take on the church’s work and fulfill the duty you are supposed to. If you take your duty lightly, then your view on belief in God is incorrect, and your attitude toward God and your duty is

problematic” (The Word, Vol. 5. The Responsibilities of Leaders and Workers. The Responsibilities of Leaders and Workers (8)). From God’s word I understood that responsible people do things diligently. No matter if they like the work or are good at it and regardless of their caliber, they approach it with honesty, and earnestly do their very best to perform it well. These people keep to their word, are trustworthy, and can gain God’s approval. Conversely, if a person agrees to take on a duty, but then only does enough to save face, and does nothing real, and doesn’t seek results or efficiency, then they’re just like the loafers and slackers of the world. They are untrustworthy and unreliable. That was how I’d been doing my duty. I always considered the flesh and rarely practiced the truth. I was living with less and less human likeness. I had to fix my attitude toward my duty. Regardless of my work capabilities, the church had entrusted me with this task, so I had to try as hard as I could to do it well and put all my energy into it. Now is a crucial time to do one’s duty. If I kept doing less than my best, and waited until God’s work had ended to put in more effort, it’d be too late to repent. After this thought, I remade my schedule in order to do as much more work as I could. When I felt like being lazy, I prayed to God and thought about His words, which made me vigilant and able to rebel against the flesh. I would pray to Him before each task, asking Him to scrutinize my heart, trying to do a good job, and not just going through the motions. Practicing like this makes me feel more at ease.

Though I wanted to do my duty properly, sometimes I fell short. Like one day, I was checking on the watering work: One newcomer still had lots of religious notions, which the waterer asked me to help resolve. At first, I wanted to try my best to help, no matter how much I could achieve. But when I actually spoke to the newcomer, I only had a patchy knowledge of some of the problems and couldn’t fellowship clearly. I couldn’t help but

think, “My understanding of the truth is shallow; this is all I can achieve. The leader will follow up on this anyway. I’ll let him resolve these problems.” But the leader was busy and couldn’t come, so it was up to us to resolve them. I knew that God’s intention was behind this situation. I used to pick easy and straightforward tasks in my duty and not stretch myself or put my all into it. I couldn’t consider the flesh or seek comfort this time. I had to do everything I could, no matter what I was able to achieve. Then my partnered sister and I found the waterer to fellowship with, and we found words of God and gospel videos related to the religious notions of the newcomer. After some discussion, we all became clearer on this aspect of the truth, and in the end, the newcomer’s problems were resolved. Having experienced this, I see that some things may seem difficult, but if I rely on God, and really pay a price, I can achieve results. If I work hard and still fall short of it, then I’ll have a clear conscience.

By looking at the failures of some brothers and sisters around me, I have learned some lessons, reflected on the attitude I had toward my duty, and seen how far I was from doing it adequately. And I’ve seen how deeply rooted my scummy nature was. Though I’m repentant now, I’m still short of God’s requirements. From now on, I have to accept God’s scrutiny and try to do my duty adequately!

33. Changes in Duty Revealed Me

By Briana, USA

I was making videos in the church, but since there wasn't much to do for some time, the leader transferred me to water newcomers. Later, because of the needs of the video work, I was sent to make videos again, and then when the work wasn't busy, I was sent back to water newcomers. I was transferred back and forth like this twice. Then a sister said to me, "You just go wherever they need you!" I didn't think much of it at the time. But less than a month later, the video work ebbed again and I couldn't help but start to worry that soon we wouldn't need as many people, and I'd be sent back to water newcomers. A lump formed in my throat at that thought. Why was I so useless? As soon as there was a little less work and fewer people were needed, I was the one transferred out. I was dispensable to the team. If I were really transferred again, what would the others think of me? Would they wonder why I was always being moved around, and other people weren't? They'd think it was because I wasn't any good and didn't have an important role in the team. These thoughts really upset me, and I didn't want to face that situation.

Once, we were discussing some issues in a video, and everyone was chiming in with their views—it was a lively discussion. But even after thinking for ages, I still didn't have any good ideas, or anything to say. At a loss, I just stayed quiet. Everyone was pitching in, but I wasn't contributing at all. I felt like I didn't even exist. I thought, "This won't do. I have to say something. I have to share something insightful so they won't overlook me." I really racked my brains and finally managed to express an idea, but no one agreed with me. I was mortified. I thought, "That was so embarrassing—what will they think of me?" It had been eight months since

I'd last done video work, so my professional skills and grasp of the principles were worse than they'd been when I left the team. I'd fallen way behind the others. Video-making skills can only be improved through constant study. The others had been doing video work the whole time, and their grasp of the skills and the principles had kept improving, whereas I'd spent a bit of time here and a bit of time there. I hadn't practiced for very long in any one place, so I wasn't particularly skilled in any field. As soon as there was less work, I was the first to go. They were fine with or without me. Based on the workload, I thought that the supervisor might send me back to water newcomers at any time. That idea really upset me, and I couldn't stop myself from crying. I wondered, "Why does this always happen to me?" Some people on the team had professional skills, some were competent, others were experienced and had done this duty for a while, some were really efficient.... They all stood out in one way or another, but as for me, my caliber wasn't as good as theirs, I wasn't as skilled, and I was always one step behind them. So when the workload lightened and fewer people were needed, naturally, I was the first who got transferred. If I had great caliber and professional skills like them, I wouldn't be transferred all the time, but unfortunately, I didn't. Why wasn't I as skilled as the others? The more I thought like this, the sadder I felt, and I began to misunderstand God.

After that, even though I was doing my duty, I didn't feel motivated. I just followed the prescribed routine in everything and was content with whatever I got done. I didn't think about how to work more efficiently to accomplish more. I didn't do my best to resolve the problems I encountered. I didn't know how long I'd stay on the team, so I'd just leave things be. During that time, I felt really anxious whenever the team leader came to speak to me, thinking he was maybe going to talk about adjusting my duty.

My heart would race until I learned that it was just a normal work conversation. This happened over and over again, which made every day exhausting. I was getting enough sleep, but I kept nodding off during my devotionals, and I wasn't gaining enlightenment from God's words. I was aware that my state was wrong, so I hurried before God to pray and seek, and reflect on my problem. Later, I read a passage of God's words that helped me understand myself. Almighty God says: **"What are your principles for conducting yourselves? You should conduct yourselves according to your station, find the right place for you, and perform the duty that you ought to; only this is someone with reason. By way of example, there are people who are adept at certain professional skills and have a grasp of principles, and they should take on the responsibility and make the final checks in that area; there are people who can provide ideas and insights, inspiring others and helping them to perform their duties better—then they should provide ideas. If you can find the right place for you and work in harmony with your brothers and sisters, you will be fulfilling your duty, and you will be conducting yourself according to your station. Originally, you may only be able to provide some ideas, but if you try to offer something else, and you end up trying very hard to do so, yet are still unable; and then, when others provide those things, you are uncomfortable, and do not wish to listen, and your heart is pained and constrained, and you complain about God and say God is unrighteous—then this is ambition. What disposition is it that engenders ambition in a person? An arrogant disposition engenders ambition. These states can certainly arise in you at any time, and if you do not seek the truth to resolve them, and have no life entry, and cannot change in this regard, then the level of qualification and purity with which you perform your duties**

will be low, and the results will also not be very good. This is not performing your duty satisfactorily and means that God has not attained glory from you. God has given every person different talents and gifts. Some people have talents in two or three areas, some have talent in one area, and some have no talents at all—if you can approach these matters correctly, then you have reason. A person with reason will be able to find their place, conduct themselves according to their stations and perform their duties well. A person who can never find their place is a person who always has ambition. They always pursue status and gain. They are never satisfied with what they have. To get more gain, they try to take as much as they can; they always hope to satisfy their extravagant desires. They think that if they have gifts and are of a good caliber, they should enjoy more of God's grace, and that having some extravagant desires is not a mistake. Does this kind of person have reason? Is it not shameless to always have extravagant desires? People who have a conscience and reason can feel that it is shameless. People who understand the truth will not do these foolish things. If you hope to fulfill your duty loyally so as to repay God's love, this is not an extravagant desire. This is in line with the conscience and reason of normal humanity. This makes God happy. If you truly wish to perform your duty well, you must first find the right station for you, and then do what you can with all your heart, with all your mind, with all your strength, and do your very best. This is satisfactory, and such performance of duty has a measure of purity. This is what a real created being should do” (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. The Principles That Should Guide One's Conduct). God's words showed me that I'd been feeling despondent because my ambitions and desires hadn't been satisfied. The others didn't admire or value me, and I wasn't able to change

my circumstances, so I misunderstood and blamed God, feeling that what He gave me wasn't good enough. My duty had changed twice because the work had slowed down, and I was possibly facing a third transfer less than a month after coming back. In this situation, I felt like I was the worst one on the team, the dispensable one, and that there was no value to my existence. I just couldn't accept this reality, and I was miserable. In the work discussions, I didn't want to seem too subpar, so I racked my brains, and tried to express some valuable, insightful opinions, but my suggestions were shot down and I felt totally humiliated. And seeing how far behind my skills were than the others, left me feeling out of sorts and disgruntled. I thought I wasn't very skilled at anything because my duty kept changing, and that I was on the bottom rung wherever I went, and might be transferred anytime. I secretly compared myself to the others. I felt that they all had strengths and excelled in a certain area, and that I was subpar in every way and also had a fatal flaw—being slow at everything. Unwilling to face that reality, I blamed God for not giving me a good caliber. I felt despondent and wronged, and lacked drive in my duty. But actually, God gives everyone different gifts, strengths, and calibers. We're ordained to do different duties—it's under God's sovereignty and arrangements. A person with reason has a heart of submission. They take their stations and put themselves to good use. But I didn't submit at all—I wasn't willing to be the least of all. I pursued a place in others' hearts, and their respect and admiration, and I became negative and slacked off when I didn't get it. I was really devoid of reason! God didn't give me great caliber, but He didn't demand much of me, either. He just wanted me to find the right station, and put my all into my duty. It was enough for me to just do what I could. But I was so arrogant and devoid of reason. I wasn't good at anything, and didn't want to face reality. I harbored wild ambitions of becoming a success overnight and

gaining others' esteem. As a result, I used up lots of energy but never achieved that, and felt negative. I was tormenting myself.

Later on, I wondered, "Why do I always envy others' gifts and strengths? Why am I always trying to gain a place in people's hearts, and don't want to fall behind? What is the root cause of this?" In my seeking, I found this in God's words: **"For antichrists, reputation and status are their life, and their lifelong goal. In all they do, their first consideration is: 'What will happen to my status? And to my reputation? Will doing this give me a good reputation? Will it elevate my status in people's minds?'** That is the first thing they think about, which is ample proof that they have the disposition and essence of antichrists; they would not consider these problems otherwise. It can be said that for antichrists, reputation and status are not some additional requirement, much less something extraneous that they could do without. They are part of the nature of antichrists, they are in their bones, in their blood, they are innate to them. Antichrists are not indifferent toward whether they possess reputation and status; this is not their attitude. Then, what is their attitude? Reputation and status are intimately connected to their daily lives, to their daily state, to what they pursue on a daily basis. And so for antichrists, status and reputation are their life. No matter how they live, no matter what environment they live in, no matter what work they do, no matter what they pursue, what their goals are, what their life's direction is, it all revolves around having a good reputation and a high status. And this aim does not change; they can never put aside such things. This is the true face of antichrists, and their essence. ... If they feel that they have no reputation, gains, or status, that no one admires them, or esteems them, or follows them, then they are very disappointed, they believe there is no point in believing in God, no

value to it, and they say to themselves, ‘Is such faith in god a failure? Is it hopeless?’ They often deliberate such things in their hearts, they deliberate how they can carve a place out for themselves in the house of God, how they can have a lofty reputation in the church, so that people listen when they talk, and support them when they act, and follow them wherever they go; so that they have the final say in the church, and fame, gain, and status—they really focus on such things in their hearts. These are what such people pursue” (The Word, Vol. 4. Exposing Antichrists. Item Nine (Part Three)). God reveals that antichrists really treasure prestige and status. In everything they do, they’re thinking of their place among others. They make prestige and status their life and the object of their pursuit. If they don’t have prestige or people’s admiration, they feel despondent, to the point of losing all interest in things. Wasn’t I acting just like that? When I was transferred back and forth, I felt like I’d become a dispensable, peripheral person without any status, apparently unimportant, so I felt really upset. When discussing issues, I didn’t have any valuable ideas to contribute, and no one accepted the views I expressed. I felt like I was the worst on the team, that no one valued or looked up to me, and it seemed like my presence had no value. I became weak and negative, misunderstanding and blaming God. I made prestige and status my life, and felt negative, slacked off and lacked motivation when I didn’t get them. I cared far too much about these things. I always chased them because I’d fallen prey to the influence of satanic poisons like “Rise to the top,” “A man leaves his name behind wherever he stays, just as a goose utters its cry wherever it flies,” and “Men should always strive to be better than their contemporaries.” I thought they were the most legitimate aims in life, and that pursuing them meant having aspiration. I worked really hard in school. I often came top in my class on tests in middle school and high school. I

was really popular and often praised by my classmates and teachers. I felt greatly satisfied. After joining the church and taking on a duty, I kept living by those satanic poisons, and really cared about my place in others' hearts, always trying to get people to admire me. Even though I wasn't a team leader or supervisor, I had to be someone important, who others would approve of. When I didn't get fame and status and my ambitions went unsatisfied, I complained and felt discontented with God's sovereignty and arrangements. I didn't dare say anything, but in my heart I was opposing God, and I became negative and slacked off in my duty. I brought myself nothing but misery and torment from living by those satanic poisons, and I was on the wrong side of God, reasoning and bargaining with Him, even doubting His righteousness and opposing Him unknowingly. At that rate, I would offend God's disposition and be eliminated by Him. I thought of God's words: **"People must be sure not to hold ambition or entertain idle dreams, not to seek fame, gain, and status or to stand out from the crowd. Even more, they must not try to be a person of greatness or superhuman, superior among men and making others worship them. That is the desire of corrupt humanity, and it is the path of Satan; God does not save such people. If people incessantly pursue fame, gain, and status without repenting, then there is no cure for them, and only one outcome: to be eliminated"** (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. The Proper Fulfillment of Duty Requires Harmonious Cooperation). Before, I never realized how serious the consequences of pursuing reputation and status are. I thought that I wouldn't do great evil like an antichrist or disrupt the church's work, and that at most, I just felt negative, weak and upset when I couldn't gain others' admiration. But then I saw that wasn't the case at all. On the surface, it didn't seem like I'd done any great evil, but I was dissatisfied with the situation God had set up, and always complaining. I

was going against God in my heart. I was resisting God! I thought of a sister I'd worked with before. She was enthusiastic in her duty at first, and got elected as leader, but later she was dismissed and lost her status. She was constantly negative because she couldn't gain others' admiration, and ultimately she betrayed God and left. Clearly, it is so dangerous for people to always chase prestige and status, and once their ambitions aren't satisfied, they become negative, misunderstand and blame God. They resist God, and even betray Him. At this point, I realized that I was in a dangerous state. I didn't want to keep rebelling against and resisting God, I wanted to cast off the constraints of prestige and status.

In my devotional one day, I read a couple of passages of God's words: **"When God requires that people fulfill their duty well, He is not asking them to complete a certain number of tasks or accomplish any great endeavors, nor to perform any great undertakings. What God wants is for people to be able to do all they can in a down-to-earth way, and live in accordance with His words. God does not need you to be great or noble, or bring about any miracles, nor does He want to see any pleasant surprises in you. He does not need such things. All God needs is for you to steadfastly practice according to His words. When you listen to God's words, do what you have understood, carry out what you have comprehended, remember well what you have heard, and then, when the time comes to practice, do so according to God's words. Let them become your life, your realities, and what you live out. Thus, God will be satisfied"** (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. The Proper Fulfillment of Duty Requires Harmonious Cooperation). **"If God made you foolish, then there is meaning in your foolishness; if He made you bright, then there is meaning in your brightness. Whatever talents God gives you, whatever your strengths, however high your IQ, they all have a**

purpose for God. All these things were preordained by God. The role you play in your life and the duty you do were ordained by God long ago. Some people see that others possess strengths they do not and are discontent. They want to change things by learning more, seeing more, and being more diligent. But there is a limit to what their diligence can achieve, and they cannot surpass those with gifts and expertise. No matter how much you fight, it is useless. God has ordained what you will be, and there is nothing anyone can do to change it. Whatever you are good at, that is where you should make an effort. Whatever duty you are suited to is the duty you should perform. Do not try to force yourself into areas outside your skillset and do not envy others. Everyone has their function. Do not think that you can do everything well, or that you are more perfect or better than others, always desiring to replace others and put yourself on display. This is a corrupt disposition. There are those who think that they cannot do anything well, and that they have no skills at all. If that is the case, you should just be a person who listens and submits in a down-to-earth manner. Do what you can and do it well, with all your strength. That is enough. God will be satisfied” (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. The

Principles That Should Guide One’s Conduct). I saw from God’s words that it isn’t His intention for us to become great people. He hopes we’ll conduct ourselves and do our duties according to our stations and in a down-to-earth manner, focus on practicing His words, and be obedient created beings. Our calibers and professional capabilities are all under God’s sovereignty and arrangements. I had to learn to accept and submit, and put all that God had given me to good use based on my strengths, and do my best. My skills weren’t as good as the others’, but I wasn’t incapable of doing the work. Since the church had arranged for me to do that duty, I had to steadfastly

give it my all, and do whatever I could. When discussing work, I only needed to talk about things I understood. If I lacked insight or didn't know the principles, I needed to seek from and fellowship with the others, listen to their ideas, and learn from their strengths to make up for my weaknesses. At this thought, my heart brightened, and I had a path and direction for practice. I used to think that being transferred was something embarrassing. When it happened, I felt that it proved that I was the worst, so I couldn't approach it properly. Thinking about it now, that was a problem with my perspective. God gives everyone different gifts, strengths, and calibers, and has different requirements of everyone. It's true that my skills weren't that great, so when the team didn't have that much work, the church adjusted my duty based on my strengths. That was in line with the principles and benefited the church's work. I should approach it correctly. Moreover, when God measures a person, it's not just based on whether they can do a job well, but on whether they pursue the truth, truly submit to Him, and are loyal in their duty. Thinking about this brightened my heart, and I no longer felt constrained. I also knew exactly what I should pursue. I prayed to God, "Oh God, thank You for enlightening me and helping me to understand Your intention. I don't know when I will be transferred, but I'm ready to submit to Your sovereignty and arrangements. No matter where I do my duty, I only want to give it my all and satisfy You!"

After shifting my mindset, my state when doing my duty changed too. I used to always think that I wasn't like the others, that I was just a temporary team member who might leave at any time. I felt like I was on the lowest rung and had no sense of belonging. I misunderstood and felt distant from God, and didn't give my all to my duty. But as of today, I don't feel that way anymore. No matter where I do a duty or for how long, God's good intention is behind it, so I should learn to submit. Even if I have to

leave later on, I'm making videos right now, and I have to do my best every day, and put my heart into my duty and every situation that I experience. When I did my duty again, I would often pray to God, asking Him to guide me to become more efficient. I would also give thought to what issues there were in my work, so I could summarize and rectify them quickly. When I didn't understand principles, I would seek from and fellowship with the others. I felt at ease performing my duty this way, and I felt closer to God.

Later, in a gathering, I read a passage of God's words that really moved me. Almighty God says: **"What should people do in response to God's arrangements of and sovereignty over their fates? (Submit to God's orchestrations and arrangements.) First, you should seek to understand why the Creator has arranged this kind of fate and living environment for you, why He makes you encounter and experience certain things, and why your fate is the way it is. From this, you should understand what your heart yearns for and what it needs, as well as God's sovereignty and arrangements. After you understand and know these things, you should not resist, make your own choices about, reject, contradict, or avoid your fate. Of course, you also should not try to bargain with God. Instead, you should submit. Why should you submit? Because you are a created being, you cannot orchestrate your fate and you do not have sovereignty over it. Your fate is determined by God. When it comes to your fate, you are passive and you have no choices. The only thing you should do is submit. You should not make your own choices about your fate or avoid it, you should not bargain with God, and you should not go against your fate or complain. Of course, you should especially not say things like, 'The fate God has arranged for me is bad. It's miserable and it's worse than the fate of others,' or 'My fate is bad and I don't get to enjoy any happiness or**

prosperity. God has arranged things badly for me.' These words are judgments and by speaking them, you are overstepping your position. They are not words that should be spoken by a created being and they are not perspectives or attitudes that a created being should have. Instead, you should let go of these various fallacious understandings, definitions, views, and comprehensions of fate. At the same time, you should be able to adopt a correct attitude and stance so as to submit to all of the things that will happen as part of the fate God has arranged for you. You should not resist, and you should certainly not be depressed and complain that Heaven is not fair, that God has arranged things badly for you, and not provided you with the very best. Created beings do not have the right to choose their fate. God did not give you this kind of obligation and He did not bestow this right upon you. So, you should not try to make choices, reason with God, or make additional requests of Him. You should conform to and face God's arrangements, no matter what they are. You should face and try to experience and appreciate whatever God has arranged. You should completely submit to everything that you should experience through God's arrangements. You should comply with the fate that God has arranged for you. Even if you do not like something, or if you suffer because of it, even if it threatens and suppresses your pride and dignity, so long as it is something that you should experience, something that God has orchestrated and arranged for you, you should submit to it and you have no choice about it. Because God arranges people's fates and has sovereignty over them, they cannot be negotiated with Him. So, if people are sensible and possess the reason of normal humanity, they should not complain that their fate is bad or that this thing or that thing is not good for them. They should not approach their duty, their

life, the road that they follow in their faith, the situations that God has arranged, or His demands of them with a depressed attitude just because they feel that their fate is bad” (The Word, Vol. 6. On the Pursuit of the Truth I. How to Pursue the Truth (2)). Contemplating God’s words showed me more clearly how to approach God’s sovereignty and arrangements. All of our fates are in God’s hands. What kind of family a person is born into, what kind of education they get, their gifts and strengths, when they come to the church and take on a duty, and what duty they do, are all arranged by God, and God’s good intention is behind them. Before, I never understood why I was always being transferred, but after giving it careful thought, I saw that it was really what I needed. Without these experiences, I wouldn’t have seen how bad my desire for prestige and status was. I would still think that I’d changed a bit, and be unaware of how deep-rooted Satan’s philosophies were in me, and that they’d made me lose the reason of normal humanity and reason with God and oppose Him, and I wouldn’t see that I’d be eliminated if I kept pursuing them. Going through this, I gained some clarity on my fallacious views about pursuing prestige and status, and I realized that it’s not the right path, it’s a way for Satan to corrupt and harm humans. I also learned that I should approach my own caliber correctly, accept and submit to God’s sovereignty and arrangements, be able to stand in my station, and be a created being with reason. No matter if I’m transferred in the future, no matter what duty I do, I need to submit to God’s sovereignty and arrangements, seek His intention, adapt to, experience, and immerse myself in every situation He arranges for me, and strive to gain something and learn about myself through them.

34. Behind a Family's Collapse

By Xiaoqiu, China

My husband and I accepted Almighty God's work of the last days in May 2012. We read God's words and sang hymns in praise of God together all the time, and I felt so happy and fulfilled. Before long, I took on a duty in the church and I went out frequently to attend gatherings and share the gospel. My husband was really supportive of me. But later on, my family started trying to keep me from practicing my faith because of the Communist Party's oppression, and from that point on, our once harmonious, peaceful life was completely shattered.

One day, my older brother called us and said he'd seen on the news that the government was seriously cracking down on believers in Almighty God, arresting them and then giving them prison sentences. He said, "If one person is a believer, their future generations are impacted, too. Their kids can't get into university, then their prospects for work or a good future are shot. You can't keep practicing this religion." My husband worked in a school, and when he heard what my brother had said, he said to me with concern, "Faith is a good thing, but the Communist Party is arresting believers like crazy. Even our kids' futures will be impacted. I don't want to practice this religion anymore, and you should stop attending gatherings. If you want to follow God, just do it in secret at home." I responded, "Can I even be called a believer if I don't go to gatherings? Can I learn the truth that way? Believing in God and pursuing the truth—that's the right path in life. I have to go to gatherings." Seeing I wasn't going to budge, he took a stool and flashlight, and broke them out of anger. The next day, after he came home from his school he told me, "We had a meeting at the school today. The Central Committee has issued an official document saying that

believers in Almighty God are considered political criminals, and are the targets of a major national crackdown. Teachers and their families aren't allowed to have a religion, and anyone found to be religious will be expelled and blacklisted from employment. Their children won't be allowed into college—no school will accept them. You can't keep practicing your religion. If someone finds out and reports you, I'll lose my job and our kids' futures will suffer. It will ruin our family.” Hearing him say this, I was thinking that we needed my husband's salary to cover our family expenses. If he really were fired because of my faith, how would we get by? And wouldn't our children hate me if they couldn't get into university or find a job? These thoughts were really upsetting for me, so I called out to God in my heart, asking Him to guide me to understand His intention. I thought of something from God's words after my prayer: **“The fate of man is controlled by the hands of God. You are incapable of controlling yourself: Despite man always rushing and busying himself on his own behalf, he remains incapable of controlling himself. If you could know your own prospects, if you could control your own fate, would you still be a created being?”** (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. Restoring the Normal Life of Man and Taking Him to a Wonderful Destination). Thinking this over, I could see that people's fates are entirely in God's hands. Whatever job my husband may have and the kind of future our kids have are up to God's rule and arrangements—those things aren't up to any person. I couldn't give up my faith to protect their jobs or futures. I felt ready to leave our futures in God's hands and submit to His orchestrations. I didn't feel as worried when I thought about it that way, and I kept attending gatherings and doing my duty, as usual.

Then one day in July 2013, I was arrested along with a few other sisters while we were in a gathering. That evening, Captain Zhao from the

police station interrogated me, demanding to know, “Who converted you? Who’s your church leader?” I didn’t respond. Then he went on, “Your husband was my teacher. Tell me all about the church and I can let you go back home, seeing as how he was my teacher.” I realized this was one of Satan’s tricks to try to get me to sell out the brothers and sisters and betray God—I couldn’t fall for it. I silently prayed to God over and over, asking Him to watch over me and help me stand firm in my testimony. After that, I just ignored Captain Zhao, no matter what he asked me. He ended up taking me back to a holding room. The next morning, an officer from the municipal Public Security Bureau came to interrogate me. I was startled to see it was my cousin. Seeing it was me, his eyes bulged with anger and he said, pointing at me, “What a shock! You’re religious? When did you start believing? Who converted you?” I ignored him. He said some other things blaspheming God, and then went on, “The national government issued official documents ages ago saying that if anyone is found to believe in Almighty God, three generations of their descendants are implicated. Your older son just graduated from college and is looking for work, and your younger son is about to go to college. You have to think of your children’s future. The Communist Party is so powerful—insisting on believing in the face of that is like an egg trying to smash a rock. You’ve got to give this up!” Hearing all this, I was thinking that continuing to practice my faith was certain to impact my sons’ futures. I’d paid quite a price for their education—wouldn’t all those years of blood, sweat, and tears be in vain if they really couldn’t find jobs in the end? This was a really miserable thought for me. I prayed to God, asking Him to watch over my heart and guide me to understand His intention, to know what I should do. Then this passage from God’s words occurred to me: **“From the moment you come crying into this world, you begin to fulfill your duty. For God’s plan**

and for His ordination, you perform your role and start your life's journey. Whatever your background, and whatever the journey ahead of you, no one can escape the orchestrations and arrangements of Heaven, and no one is in control of their own destiny, for only He who rules over all things is capable of such work. ... Man's heart and spirit are held in the hand of God, everything of his life is beheld in the eyes of God. Regardless of whether or not you believe this, any and all things, whether living or dead, will shift, change, renew, and disappear in accordance with God's thoughts. Such is the way in which God presides over all things" (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. God Is the Source of Man's Life). From God's words, I could see that absolutely all things are in His hands, so didn't that include my sons' futures and fates? How much someone suffers in life and what sort of work they do is all predetermined by God. I couldn't fret over those things. And no matter how great someone's education and work are out in the world, that doesn't mean they'll have a good future and fate. Without believing in God, without accepting God's salvation, a person will just die in the disasters when they come, and they won't have any future to speak of. Coming before God, accepting the truth, and being saved by God is the only way to truly have a future. So I said to my cousin, "Whatever my sons' futures are is their fate—it's not up to any person. My belief in God and pursuit of the truth are the right path and I am completely set on it. Don't bother giving me advice!" He didn't respond when he saw how resolute I was in keeping my faith. They kept me there for one day and one night, then sent me back home.

As soon as I got back to the house, my husband picked up a stool and was about to hit me with it, but our older son held him back. Swearing at me, my husband said, "Because of your faith, I've been completely disgraced, and our sons' futures are going to be destroyed by you sooner or

later. If you keep this faith, I'll beat you to death!" Seeing him in that state, I thought to myself that apparently our bond as a couple was too weak to face any real hardship. When I was arrested for my faith and it impacted his own interests and reputation, he was threatening to beat me. How was that the love between a husband and wife? My younger sister was at our house at the time, and she chimed in, "Can't you just give up your faith? If you keep on with this, you'll destroy your sons' futures!" I told them, "All I'm doing is attending gatherings and reading God's words. This is the right path to take in life—I haven't done anything wrong. How could that compromise my kids' futures? It's the Communist Party that oppresses believers and doesn't even spare their families. If our kids can't find jobs in the future, that's because of the Communist Party. Why can't you tell right from wrong?" Then my younger brother called my husband and said, "If my sister keeps following that religion, just break her legs. Then see how she manages to go to those gatherings." And his wife said viciously, "Beat her to death if she keeps that up. Our side of the family won't try to settle scores with you." My heart went cold. I thought my family would be understanding of me. I never imagined they would listen to the Communist Party, that they'd become so heartless just to protect their own interests, and wouldn't even care if I lived or died to keep me from practicing my faith. Where was their humanity? The next day my older brother called my husband and said, "If my sister keeps her religion, we're going to cut off ties with her. I'll support you if you want a divorce. Don't leave her with anything and kick her out. See how she gets by after that." Around midday my cousin came by in a police car and told my husband to keep an eye on me and to keep me from practicing my faith, otherwise the whole family would be implicated. My husband said to me, "For the sake of our children and this family, today you need to look your cousin in the eyes and make a

statement that you're giving up your faith." I told him, "Following God is right and proper. I will not give up my faith." Seeing he couldn't get me to budge, he said angrily, "If you insist on believing in God and disregard our kids' futures, I'm going to have to divorce you." He got a divorce agreement and told me to sign it. The agreement said that I would leave, taking nothing with me. We had both worked so hard to establish our home—how would I live if I left empty-handed? But then I thought again about how God has already determined how much a person is going to suffer in their life, and no matter what, I couldn't stop believing in God, and I had to keep my faith and continue pursuing the truth. I was just about to sign, and then my husband noticed I had no intention of giving in, so he said, "Let's not get a divorce, then. If you want to be a believer, I can't stop you. Just go ahead and do it." That was what he said, but in reality, he got more and more controlling of me. At home he wouldn't let me say the word "God," and he'd hit me every time I said something he didn't like. He stopped going anywhere for his vacations, but just stayed at home to keep an eye on me. When he saw me reading God's words he grabbed the book of God's words away from me, and said, "If I see this one more time, I'm burning this book!" For a while, I couldn't go out to attend gatherings, have any contact with the brothers and sisters, or read God's words at home. I had absolutely no freedom.

One evening I snuck into our bedroom to read God's words when my husband suddenly burst in and said really aggressively, "You still dare read that! If you're arrested again, my job and our children's futures are done for! The Communist Party is capable of absolutely anything." I told him, "I'm just reading God's words. How could that impact your and our sons' futures?" Shockingly, he ran over and wrapped both hands around my neck, squeezing and saying, "I'll just strangle you and be done with it!" I wasn't

strong enough to free myself and couldn't manage to get any words out. He didn't let go until I stopped breathing and wasn't even moving. I was gasping for air, and in so much emotional pain. I felt like being a believer in China, taking the right path, was way too hard. I was arrested by the Communist Party, my family was standing in my way, I couldn't do a duty anymore, and now I'd even been stripped of my right to read God's words. What meaning was left in my life? I felt like I'd be better off just dying. I grabbed my husband's razor, planning to slit my wrists, to commit suicide. Then this passage of God's words suddenly came to mind: **"Today, most people do not have that knowledge. They believe that suffering is without value, they are renounced by the world, their home life is troubled, they are not beloved of God, and their prospects are bleak. The suffering of some people reaches an extreme, and their thoughts turn to death. This is not true love for God; such people are cowards, they have no perseverance, they are weak and powerless! God is eager for man to love Him, but the more man loves Him, the greater man's suffering, and the more man loves Him, the greater man's trials. ... Thus, during these last days you must bear testimony to God. No matter how great your suffering, you should walk until the very end, and even at your last breath, still you must be faithful to God and at the mercy of God; only this is truly loving God, and only this is the strong and resounding testimony"** (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. Only by Experiencing Painful Trials Can You Know the Loveliness of God). Thanks to God's words waking me up at just the right moment, I didn't take that foolish action. I wanted to kill myself because I was miserable and tormented, unable to endure the abuse. How cowardly of me. I was so lacking in faith, and I didn't have any testimony at all. God hopes that people don't lose their faith in Him when they go through pain and

hardship, that they can bear witness for Him. How could I bear any witness if I died? Wouldn't I become Satan's laughingstock? Realizing this, I resolved that no matter how my husband and relatives persecuted me and tried to keep me from my faith in the future, no matter how much I had to suffer, as long as I had a single breath left, I would live my life well and follow God until the end. But because I was being monitored by the police and constrained by my family after my arrest, I wasn't able to live a proper life of the church for three years. I had to sneak off to my father's house to secretly read God's words there. Then in the summer of 2016, I finally made contact with the brothers and sisters. I was able to resume a life of the church and take on a duty again.

Later on, my husband still kept persecuting me. I remember once after I got back from a gathering, he took me to my older brother's house, where I saw he was there with my two other brothers and their wives—they were all glowering at me. I knew they were going to try to force me to give up my faith again, so I said a silent prayer, asking God to guide me so that no matter what they did to me, I wouldn't be held back by them. My older brother glared at me and said, "The Communist Party is atheistic. It's been suppressing religious beliefs all these years and no one can change it. Believing in God under Party rule is bound to get you arrested, and the rest of the family will be implicated, too. Aren't you just asking for trouble?" My brother-in-law followed up, "My son took the college entrance examination and had to fill out the political background check, and they asked about any religious family members. The police found your record of believing in Almighty God and they didn't let him pass. I had to use my connections and send gifts—it took a ton of effort, and then he just barely got through. In China, if someone believes in God their whole family is dragged into it. You have to give up your faith!" Then my younger brother

asked me, “Can’t you give some thought to our family, to your sons’ futures? Stop believing in God! What will happen if you give up your faith? Will it kill you?” So I told them, “Do you know what a good future is? You think that having a good job, having nice food and clothing is having a good future? Disasters are growing all the time and anyone who isn’t a believer will fall into them. Only those who believe in God and are saved by Him will survive, and only they will have a good future and fate.” My husband responded, “I don’t know what’s going to happen later on—I can only see what’s right in front of me. This is the Communist Party’s current policy—if you’re a believer, they’ll arrest you, take away your job, and this family will be implicated, too. All these years no one’s been able to change this policy of theirs, and they’re so much stronger than us! Just give up your faith! Here in front of everyone, say you will.” As soon as he was done, everyone else started saying this and that, urging me not to believe in God anymore. We used to be a big, happy family, but the Communist Party’s oppression had turned things into a mess. My husband was constantly hitting me and yelling at me, and we didn’t have a single day of peace. When was it going to end? I was getting more and more upset, so I said a prayer to God and then thought of this passage from His words: **“You must suffer hardship for the truth, you must give yourself to the truth, you must endure humiliation for the truth, and to gain more of the truth you must undergo more suffering. This is what you should do. You must not throw away the truth for the sake of a peaceful family life, and you must not lose your life’s dignity and integrity for the sake of momentary enjoyment. You should pursue all that is beautiful and good, and you should pursue a path in life that is more meaningful. If you lead such a vulgar life, and do not pursue any objectives, do you not waste your life? What can you gain from such a life? You should**

forsake all enjoyments of the flesh for the sake of one truth, and should not throw away all truths for the sake of a little enjoyment. People like this have no integrity or dignity; there is no meaning to their existence!” (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. The Experiences of Peter: His Knowledge of Chastisement and Judgment). God’s words helped me understand His intention. I was steadfastly following God and doing my duty—I was on the path of pursuing the truth. My family members were pursuing money and reputation. We were on different paths, and it was inevitable that our family would fall apart. I had to accept that suffering in order to gain the truth. It had meaning. I couldn’t give up my faith for the sake of my family. So I said to them, “I’m certain that Almighty God is the true God, the Savior come to save mankind. There is absolutely no way I’m giving up my faith!” They all left when they saw they had no way of changing my mind.

When I got back home from a gathering one evening, my husband was leaning sprawled out on a table, drunk and crying. He said, “You’re out at gatherings every day. If you’re arrested again there’s no telling when our home will be ruined because of you.” Then he angrily overturned the table, grabbed me by the clothing with one hand, then smacked me with his other hand. Before I could even catch my breath, he violently slammed me down on the bathroom floor, hit me hard in the head, and said fiercely, “Give up your faith! I’m ready to risk everything tonight—I’ll beat you to death. Anyway, your own family doesn’t care if you live or die!” I was dizzy and my vision was blurry from being hit. He dragged me over to the head of the flight of stairs and shoved me down, saying, “If you fall to your death, I’ll just take your body to be burned and throw your ashes in the river!” I was really scared when I heard him say that—I was praying over and over to God. Thanks to God’s protection, I was able to grab a cord on the railing at the last second, which saved me from falling down the stairs. Then our

younger son came over and said to my husband, “Have you lost your mind from drinking? Mom hasn’t done anything wrong in her faith. Why are you hitting her?” His response was, “I don’t want to hit her, but if she’s arrested again, you and your brother are done for. I don’t have any choice.” With my son by my side, he didn’t dare keep hitting me, but picked up a glass table and broke it against the wall, leaving the entire room full of broken glass.

Later on, I read this in God’s words: **“Believers and nonbelievers are not compatible; rather, they are opposed to one another”** (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. God and Man Will Enter Into Rest Together). I thought that over, and I knew in my heart that even though my husband believed in God at first, that was just because he wanted to receive blessings. He wasn’t a true believer. When he heard that having faith could affect his and our sons’ future prospects, he did a complete about-face. He not only gave up his faith, but tried to keep me from believing in God. When he couldn’t stop me, he got violent with me and started treating me like an enemy because my belief was impacting his personal interests. I saw that in essence, my husband hated the truth and hated God. He was following the Communist Party to protect his own living; he was pursuing a worldly future and interests. I believed in God and was pursuing the truth, taking the right path in life—we were on two different paths. My husband and the rest of the family persecuting me that way because of my faith clearly showed me that they had an evil nature essence, that they were against God. My husband had gone to gatherings and he knew that Almighty God is the true God. I’d shared the gospel with my relatives and read them quite a lot of God’s words. None of them became believers, and the moment my faith compromised their interests, they went right along with the Communist Party, persecuting me and talking about cutting off ties with me. What kind of loved ones were they? They were entirely Satan’s minions, taking the

Communist Party's side, and opposing God. God has now become flesh and is expressing truths, exposing the nature essence of every type of person, and also showed me that I was taking a different path from my family—believers and nonbelievers are different types of people. I didn't feel so constrained by them when I realized all of that, and had a sense of release.

I read this passage in God's words later on: **"For thousands of years this has been the land of filth. It is unbearably dirty, misery abounds, ghosts run rampant everywhere, tricking and deceiving, making groundless accusations, being ruthless and vicious, trampling this ghost town and leaving it littered with dead bodies; the stench of decay covers the land and pervades the air, and it is heavily guarded. Who can see the world beyond the skies? The devil tightly trusses all of man's body, it veils both his eyes, and seals his lips firmly shut. The king of devils has rampaged for several thousand years, right up until today, when it still keeps a close watch on the ghost town, as if it were an impenetrable palace of demons; this pack of watchdogs, meanwhile, stare with glaring eyes, deeply fearful that God will catch them unawares and wipe them all out, leaving them without a place of peace and happiness. How could the people of a ghost town such as this ever have seen God? Have they ever enjoyed the dearness and loveliness of God? What appreciation have they of the matters of the human world? Who of them can understand God's eager intentions? Small wonder, then, that God incarnate remains completely hidden: In a dark society such as this, where the demons are merciless and inhumane, how could the king of devils, who kills people without batting an eye, tolerate the existence of a God who is lovely, kind, and also holy? How could it applaud and cheer the arrival of God? These lackeys! They repay kindness with hate, they began treating God as an enemy long ago, they abuse God,**

they are savage in the extreme, they have not the slightest regard for God, they plunder and pillage, they have lost all conscience, they go against all conscience, and they tempt the innocent into senselessness. Forefathers of the ancient? Beloved leaders? They all oppose God! Their meddling has left all beneath heaven in a state of darkness and chaos! Religious freedom? The legitimate rights and interests of citizens? They are all tricks for covering up sin!” (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. Work and Entry (8)). God’s words are so practical. The Communist Party being in power is Satan, the devil being in power. It detests God and can’t tolerate people having faith and following God. It wants to be the only thing people follow and worship. The Communist Party pretends to wave the flag of freedom of religion, but wildly oppresses and arrests believers in secret, and implicates their families. It even fabricates rumors and lies to mislead people who don’t know the truth, to get the Chinese people to rise up and oppose people of faith. So many people have been toyed with and exploited by the Communist Party, and they go along with the Party in denying and opposing God, and oppressing believers. They’re all going to meet their demise along with the Communist Party—they’ll be punished and obliterated by God. We used to have a happy family, but because of the Communist Party’s oppression and arrests, they became afraid of getting in trouble, and started oppressing me, too, becoming Satan’s tools. I clearly saw the Communist Party’s evil essence of hating the truth and hating God, and I also saw that only God has genuine love for human beings. It was God’s words that guided me time after time, giving me faith and allowing me to understand the truth, to see through Satan’s tricks. My husband still tries to stand in the way of my faith, but I’m not held back by him anymore. I continue to go to gatherings and do my

duty, and I'm even firmer in my determination to follow God. I thank God from my heart!

35. What Lies Behind Being Lenient With Others

By Joseph, South Korea

A few months ago, a leader assigned Brother Connor and me to take charge of watering work. After a little while, I noticed that he didn't take on much of a burden in his work. He didn't fellowship and help the brothers and sisters with their problems quickly, and wasn't very engaged in work discussions. Having learned of the situation, the leader told me that Connor was being perfunctory and irresponsible, and that I had to fellowship with him. I thought, maybe he was just busy and some work was delayed. Forget it, it wasn't like he was doing nothing at all. I shouldn't ask too much of him, and I'll go handle the issues he hadn't resolved through fellowship yet. So, I didn't look into the situation of his work. After a while, before a gathering for some brothers and sisters, I reminded Connor to first find out about their issues and difficulties ahead of time in order to find the appropriate words of God for fellowship to resolve them, and make the gathering more effective. Later, I asked some of the brothers and sisters if Connor had asked about their states and difficulties, and they all said he hadn't. I felt like he was being really irresponsible. The others had lots of difficulties and flaws in their duties. They needed more gatherings for help and fellowship, but he wasn't taking it seriously. That was really perfunctory of him! I thought, this time I should bring his issue up. But then I thought, if he didn't accept it, if he said I was too hard on him and became biased against me, wouldn't that make me seem too strict, too unfeeling toward others? Besides, Connor was young, so he would inevitably consider his flesh. Sometimes I got perfunctory and considered my flesh, too, so I shouldn't be too demanding. I could handle it myself. Isn't there a saying that goes, "Be hard on yourself, easy on others"? It was fine that I'd

get busier; all I needed to do was cut down on my rest a bit. So, I didn't go fellowship with Connor and point out this problem of his. I acted that way with other work, too. When I saw someone wasn't doing their work well, I didn't look to see what was causing that or think about how to address it, but was just always tolerant and patient. Sometimes I'd get very disgusted or angry about someone's behavior, but I'd just bottle it up. I thought, "Forget it—let them do as much as they're able to, and I will take care of the rest." Over time, the brothers and sisters wanted to seek me out for help with their problems. I no longer felt wronged or upset when I saw that they all thought highly of me. So, all along, I felt that being strict with myself and tolerant of others in our collaborations and interactions was being a person with good humanity, not like some people who are always nitpicky and can't work with anyone.

Then one day I read something in God's words about being "strict with yourself and tolerant of others," and saw myself differently. Almighty God says: **"Let us now fellowship on the next saying regarding moral conduct—'Be strict with yourself and tolerant of others'—what does this saying mean? It means that you should make strict demands of yourself and be lenient with other people, so that they can see how generous and magnanimous you are. Why should people do this, then? What is it meant to achieve? Is it doable? Is it really a natural expression of people's humanity? You must compromise yourself so much in order to take this on! You must be free of desires and demands, requiring yourself to feel less joy, suffer a bit more, pay more of a price and work more so that others do not have to wear themselves out. And if others whine, complain, or perform poorly, you must not ask too much of them—more or less is good enough. People believe that this is a sign of noble morals—but why does it ring false to Me? Is it not**

false? (It is.) Under normal circumstances, the natural expression of an ordinary person's humanity is to be tolerant of themselves and strict with others. That is a fact. People can perceive everyone else's problems—'This person is arrogant! That person is bad! This one is selfish! That one is perfunctory in doing their duty! This person is so lazy!'—while to themselves they think: 'If I'm a bit lazy, that's fine. I'm of good caliber. Though I'm lazy, I do a better job than others!' They find fault with others and like to nitpick, but with themselves they are tolerant and accommodating wherever possible. Is this not a natural expression of their humanity? (It is.) If people are expected to live up to the idea of being 'strict with yourself and tolerant of others,' what agony must they put themselves through? Could they really bear it? How many people would manage to do so? (None.) And why is that? (People are selfish by nature. They act according to the principle that it is 'Every man for himself and the devil take the hindmost.') Indeed, man is born selfish, man is a selfish creature, and is deeply committed to that satanic philosophy: 'Every man for himself and the devil take the hindmost.' People think that it would be catastrophic for them, and unnatural, not to be selfish and look out for themselves when things befall them. This is what people believe and it is how they act. If people are expected not to be selfish, and to make strict demands of themselves, and to willingly lose out rather than take advantage of others, and if they are expected to happily say, when someone takes advantage of them, 'You're taking advantage but I'm not making a fuss about it. I'm a tolerant person, I won't badmouth you or try to get my own back on you, and if you haven't taken enough advantage yet, feel free to carry on'—is that a realistic expectation? How many people could manage to do this? Is this the way that corrupt mankind

normally behaves? Obviously, for this to happen is anomalous. Why so? Because people with corrupt dispositions, especially selfish and mean people, struggle for their own interests, and giving thought to others will absolutely not make them feel satisfied. So, this phenomenon, when it does happen, is an anomaly. ‘Be strict with yourself and tolerant of others’—this claim about moral conduct is clearly just a demand that does not tally with either the facts or humanity, which is placed upon man by social moralists who do not understand humanity. It is like telling a mouse that it is not allowed to make holes or telling a cat that it is not permitted to catch mice. Is it right to make such a demand? (No. It defies the laws of humanity.) This demand clearly does not square with reality, and it is very hollow” (The Word, Vol. 6. On the Pursuit of the Truth I. What It Means to Pursue the Truth (6)). I didn’t entirely understand these words from God when I first read them, because I’d always thought that “Be strict with yourself and tolerant of others” was a positive thing. I always admired people like that and I aspired to be like that. But carefully thinking over God’s words, I felt they were entirely true. I was utterly convinced. And I was really taken aback when I read this: **“People with corrupt dispositions, especially selfish and mean people, struggle for their own interests, and giving thought to others will absolutely not make them feel satisfied. So, this phenomenon, when it does happen, is an anomaly. ‘Be strict with yourself and tolerant of others’—this claim about moral conduct is clearly just a demand that does not tally with either the facts or humanity, which is placed upon man by social moralists who do not understand humanity. It is like telling a mouse that it is not allowed to make holes or telling a cat that it is not permitted to catch mice.”** It turned out that the idea of “Be strict with yourself and tolerant of others” I’d been upholding was impractical,

went against humanity, and was something people just can't achieve. It can't be a criterion by which people comport themselves and act. Looking back on my behavior, it really was just as God had exposed. When I was strict with myself and lenient with others, I felt wronged and upset, and even when I met that mark, I didn't really want to—I wasn't happy to do it. Like with Connor, I was well aware that he was muddling through his duty, being lazy, slippery and irresponsible. I was angry and I wanted to expose his issues so he could turn things around quickly. But I'd think about how I shouldn't be too strict, that I should be hard on myself, and easy on others, so I'd give up on the idea of talking to him about his problems. I felt like I could suffer a little more, pay a bit more of a price, and not ask too much of him so I wouldn't seem too inconsiderate, and too nitpicky. I was responsible for a few groups' work, so I already had a heavy workload. Having to also help him address issues in his work left me feeling wronged, and I had lots of complaints, but for the sake of being strict with myself and tolerant of others, and so others would think well of me, I just kept quiet and tolerated it. That was my actual state, and what I really thought. Just as God says: **“Man is born selfish, man is a selfish creature, and is deeply committed to that satanic philosophy: ‘Every man for himself and the devil take the hindmost.’ People think that it would be catastrophic for them, and unnatural, not to be selfish and look out for themselves when things befall them. This is what people believe and it is how they act.”** Man is selfish by nature, and I'm no exception. When I'm doing more, I resent the hard work and toil and I feel wronged, upset, and unhappy about it. But why did I still go against my heart, being strict with myself and lenient with others? What corrupt disposition is really hidden behind this idea of being “strict with yourself and tolerant of others”? What are the

consequences of being that way? With these questions, I came before God to pray and seek.

One day, I read a passage of God's words: **“Be strict with yourself and tolerant of others,”** as with sayings about **‘Don’t pocket the money you pick up’** and **‘Derive pleasure from helping others,’** is one of those demands that traditional culture makes regarding people’s moral conduct. By the same token, regardless of whether someone can attain or exercise this moral conduct, it is still not the standard or norm for measuring their humanity. It may be that you really are capable of being strict with yourself and tolerant of others, and that you hold yourself to particularly high standards. You may be squeaky clean and you may always think of others and show consideration for them, without being selfish and seeking after your own interests. You may seem particularly magnanimous and selfless, and have a strong sense of social responsibility and social morals. Your noble personality and qualities may be on display to those close to you, and to those you encounter and interact with. Your behavior may never give others any reason to blame or criticize you, eliciting instead profuse praise and even admiration. People may regard you as someone who is truly strict with themselves and tolerant of others. However, these are nothing more than external behaviors. Are the thoughts and wishes deep in your heart consistent with these external behaviors, with these actions that you live out externally? The answer is no, they are not. The reason you can act in this way is that there is a motive behind it. What is that motive, exactly? Could you bear for that motive to see the light of day? Certainly not. This proves that this motive is something unmentionable, something dark and evil. ... It can be said with certainty that most of the people who require themselves to fulfill the moral of being ‘strict

with yourself and tolerant of others,' are obsessed with status. Driven by their corrupt dispositions, they cannot help but pursue prestige among men, social prominence, and status in the eyes of others. All of these things are related to their desire for status, and are pursued under the cover of their good moral conduct. And how do these pursuits of theirs come about? They entirely come from and are driven by their corrupt dispositions. So, no matter what, whether someone fulfills the moral of being 'strict with yourself and tolerant of others' or not, and whether or not they do so to perfection, this cannot change their humanity essence at all. By implication, this means that it cannot in any way change their outlook on life or their value system, or guide their attitudes and perspectives on all manner of people, events, and things. Isn't that the case? (It is.) The more that someone is capable of being strict with themselves and tolerant of others, the better they are at putting on an act, disguising themselves, and at misleading others with good behavior and pleasing words, and the more deceitful and wicked they are by nature. The more that they are this type of person, the deeper their love and pursuit of status and power becomes. However great, glorious and correct their external moral conduct seems to be, and however pleasing it is for people to behold, the unspoken pursuit that lies in the depths of their heart, as well as their nature essence, and even their ambitions, may burst forth from them at any time. Therefore, however good their moral conduct is, it cannot conceal their intrinsic humanity essence, or their ambitions and desires. It cannot conceal their hideous nature essence which does not love positive things and is averse to and hates the truth. As these facts show, the saying 'Be strict with yourself and tolerant of others' is more than just absurd—it exposes those ambitious types who attempt to use such

sayings and behaviors to cover up their unspeakable ambitions and desires” (The Word, Vol. 6. On the Pursuit of the Truth I. What It Means to Pursue the Truth (6)).

I saw from what’s exposed in God’s words that being “strict with yourself and tolerant of others” looks like it’s being understanding and tolerant of others, that it’s being broad-minded and noble, but deep inside, an unspeakable, dark, evil motive lurks. It’s flaunting yourself through superficially good behavior, just to gain admiration from and be worshiped by others, and have a higher status and reputation among others. That kind of person seems commendable from the outside, but in fact, they’re a hypocrite, pretending to be a good person. I thought about how I’d acted and what I’d revealed while partnering with Connor. No matter how perfunctory and irresponsible he was in work, I not only didn’t point it out and fellowship or prune him, but kept being understanding, accommodating and indulgent. No matter how busy I was, how little time I had, I’d go do whatever Connor hadn’t done. Even if it was difficult or tiring, I’d push through. In fact, doing that wasn’t me being magnanimous. I had ulterior motives. I was afraid of wounding his pride and offending him if I pointed it out directly, caring how he would think of me. Even though I wasn’t willing to help him do what he hadn’t done, I just forced myself to do it every time, to leave a good impression, to show everyone how generous I was, and to gain their admiration. As a result, I became more and more slippery and deceitful. I seemed like an understanding person, but my own wrong motives were behind that. The way I acted was giving people a false impression, deceiving them, and fooling them. At that point, I gained some discernment of the essence of being “strict with yourself and tolerant of others.” I felt that the despicable motives hidden in my heart were nauseating. I was also really grateful to God. Without Him exposing the essence of that part of traditional culture, I’d have remained deluded,

thinking that being “strict with yourself and tolerant of others” was being someone with good humanity. I finally realized this is a fallacy Satan uses to mislead and corrupt people. It’s not the truth at all, nor is it a standard or criterion for evaluating a person’s humanity.

Later, I read two passages of God’s words: **“No matter how standardized mankind’s so-called requirements and sayings about people’s moral character are, or how much they suit the tastes, outlooks, wishes, and even interests of the masses, they are not the truth. This is something you must understand. And since they are not the truth, you should make haste to deny and abandon them. You must also dissect their essence, as well as the consequences that come from people living by them. Can they really bring about true repentance in you? Can they really help you to know yourself? Can they really make you live out human likeness? They can do none of these things. They will only make you hypocritical and self-righteous. They will make you more cunning and wicked. There are some who say, ‘In the past, when we held to these aspects of traditional culture, we felt like good people. When other people saw how we behaved, they thought we were good people, too. But actually, we know in our hearts what sort of evil we are capable of. Doing a bit of good only disguises that. But if we abandon the good behaviors that traditional culture demands of us, what should we do instead? What behaviors and manifestations will bring glory to God?’ What do you think of this question? Do they still not know what truths believers in God should practice? God has expressed so many truths, and there are so many truths that people should be practicing. So why do you refuse to practice the truth, and insist on being false good people and hypocrites? Why are you pretending?”** (The Word, Vol. 6.

On the Pursuit of the Truth I. What It Means to Pursue the Truth (5)). **“In short, though we**

have listed these sayings about moral conduct from traditional culture, the goal of this is not merely to inform you that they are the notions and imaginings of people, and that they come from Satan, and nothing more. It is to make you understand clearly that the essence of these things is false, disguised, and deceptive. Even if people possess these behaviors, it does not in any way mean that they are living out normal humanity. Rather, they are using these false behaviors to cover up their intents and goals, and to conceal their corrupt dispositions, and their nature essence. As a result, people are getting better and better at pretending and tricking others, which in turn causes them to become even more corrupt and evil. The moral standards of traditional culture that corrupt humanity clings to are incompatible with the truths that God expresses, nor are they consistent with any of the words that God teaches people, they have no connection whatsoever. If you still cling to aspects of traditional culture, then you have been thoroughly misled and poisoned. If there is any matter in which you cling to traditional culture and abide by its principles and views, then you are rebelling against God and violating the truth, and running counter to God in that matter. If you cling to and commit yourself to any of these claims about moral conduct, and treat it as a criterion or basis for how you view people or things, then that is where you have erred, and if you judge or harm people to a certain degree, you will have committed a sin. If you always insist on measuring everyone by the moral standards of traditional culture, then the number of people that you have condemned and wronged will keep multiplying and you will certainly condemn and resist God, and then you will be an arch-sinner” (The Word, Vol. 6. On the Pursuit of the Truth I. What It Means to Pursue the Truth (5)). Pondering God’s words brought me some more clarity. When we notice someone being

perfunctory, cunning, or irresponsible in work, we should point it out to them or prune them so they can see the nature and consequences of being perfunctory, and turn it around in time. That's what someone with good humanity should do. But to preserve my image and status, I was indulgent and accommodating, and kept quiet about problems I saw. As a result, Connor wasn't aware of his corrupt disposition, and he continued being perfunctory and irresponsible in his duty. That's damaging for the life entry of brothers and sisters—that's a transgression. I wasn't being remotely considerate or understanding of him, but I was harming him. I saw I wasn't a truly good person at all. Not only was I harming brothers and sisters, but I was delaying and impacting the church's work. At that moment, I truly realized that "Be strict with yourself and tolerant of others" isn't the truth, that it is not the criterion by which people should comport themselves, but a heresy and fallacy that Satan uses to mislead, misguide and corrupt people. I couldn't keep letting Satan fool me—I should do what God requires, using God's words as my basis and the truth as my criterion for my views on people and things as well as my comportment and action. After that, when I noticed issues with Connor, I didn't tolerate or indulge him anymore. I pointed them out so he could realize them and change.

Before long, I was given responsibility for another item of work, which was handling general affairs. While checking up on it, I noticed a brother wasn't serious in his duty and was sloppy in everything he did. I wanted to just sort out his mistakes myself and be done with them, to avoid pointing them out and embarrassing him. Then it occurred to me that I was revealing these thoughts to protect my own interests and establish a good image with others. I didn't want to point out his issue, afraid to offend him. That's a despicable motive! I remembered something God said: **"At the same time as performing your duty properly, you must also ensure that**

you do nothing that does not benefit the life entry of God's chosen ones, and say nothing that is unhelpful to the brothers and sisters. At the very least, you must do nothing that goes against your conscience and must absolutely not do anything shameful. That which rebels against or resists God, in particular, you absolutely must not do, and you must not do anything that disturbs the work or life of the church. Be just and honorable in everything you do and ensure that your every action is presentable before God" (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. How Is Your Relationship With God?). God's words showed me clearly the principle of doing things. Whatever I do, it has to benefit brothers' and sisters' life entry and be edifying. I also have to accept God's scrutiny. When I saw that brother being perfunctory in his duty, I should point it out so he could see his problem and quickly change. That would be beneficial for his life entry and for the church's work. If I didn't say anything, but just quietly helped him do things, he wouldn't see his issues and he wouldn't progress in his duty. At this thought, I spoke up about the problems I saw in his work. He wanted to change after he heard me out. I felt really at ease and at peace after I put that into practice. Thank Almighty God!

36. Reflections on Resisting Supervision

By Mi Hui, China

In 2021 I was responsible for the church's watering work. During that time, the leaders would supervise and follow up on our work by often inquiring about our progress, and whether we had any problems or difficulties in doing our duty. At first, I would actively respond, but gradually I became impatient and thought, "Always following up on our work is too much trouble. Who knows how much of our time is wasted? Won't that affect my work results? If my results are poor, won't the leaders dismiss me?" With those thoughts in mind, I became very resistant toward that kind of supervision by the leaders.

The leaders once sent a letter to understand our work status, asking questions including how many people had accepted the gospel that month, how many newcomers did not gather regularly and why, their existing religious notions, and how we fellowshiped to resolve them. Seeing that series of questions made me feel troubled, thinking, "So much content to cover, and I have to review and discuss it all with the waterers. It will waste so much time!" So I resisted in my heart, "Asking so many detailed questions about the work wastes too much of our time! Then if the results of our watering work are poor, will you say that I didn't do real work, and don't have work ability?" When I saw that the sisters who were my work partners also felt troubled, I thought, "If they also feel this is a waste of time, then as a team, we can give the leaders a suggestion. Then maybe in the future, when the leaders follow up on the work, they won't ask such specific questions, and fewer shortcomings in my work will be exposed." So half-joking, I said, "The leaders must really care about us to ask such detailed questions about our work." As soon as I said that, one sister chimed

in and said, “Down to the smallest detail!” Upon hearing that the sister and I were thinking the same thing, I laughed and said, “We are all busy enough as it is. Having to understand and respond to these questions is too much trouble. Won’t that impact the effectiveness of our watering work?” Seeing the other sisters nodding in agreement made me secretly happy, “It looks like they all object to it. Later, we can get together and submit suggestions to the leaders. That way they won’t always be checking up on our work.” With my incitement, whenever the leaders tried to learn about our work, my work partners would look troubled and even if they replied, they would reluctantly respond in a few sentences. They didn’t give detailed summaries of the problems and deviations in the work, so the leaders couldn’t understand or come to grips with our work issues. As a result, our watering work never improved.

Another time, the leaders discovered that we did not pay enough attention to cultivating waterers, and sent a letter to fellowship about the importance of that work and to give us some good practice methods. The letter also pointed out that we were not bearing a burden for that cultivation work, were dragging our feet on implementation, and that our efficiency was too low, which not only deprived the brothers and sisters of training but also directly impacted the watering work. The leaders wanted us to treat this as an important issue, and demanded that we quickly train some newcomers to practice watering. After seeing the letter, I felt resistant: “This is asking way too much. These newcomers had just started to train in their duty. You think cultivating them is so easy? You have experience training people, but you can’t hold us to your standard!” But then I thought, “If I complain directly, will the leaders think I lack work ability? I can’t let that happen! I have to make them understand that our entire team can’t meet this demand. That way the leaders can’t do anything to us, and even if they pursue this

issue, I'm not the only one involved." Frowning, and with some difficulty, I said, "The leaders' demand is a bit high, and our experience can't compare to theirs." As soon as I said that, one by one the other sisters nodded in approval. One of them said, "The leaders are high-caliber people and work very efficiently. How can we possibly compare with them?" Another said, "The leaders are asking too much of us. How can we do this work going forward?" Seeing that everyone felt that way, I was very happy, thinking, "Now the leaders shouldn't be able to do anything to us. After all, they can't dismiss our whole team!" The next day I sent the leaders a response letter that described all the difficulties we had in doing our duty so they could understand our situation. At the end of the letter, I intentionally added a line that said, "These are the results of our work for now, and it is not easy to improve them." In the letter, I emphasized the word "our" so the leaders would know that was our collective opinion. That way they would no longer put such high demands on us. But to my surprise, during the next gathering the leaders pruned and exposed me, saying that when doing my duty I didn't bear a burden and didn't strive to improve. They said that I spread negativity, formed a clique and instigated the sisters to join me in resisting, that I delayed cultivating newcomers, and disturbed the church's work, and that I didn't play a positive role in the group at all. Finally, they dismissed me.

After being dismissed, I was filled with remorse and very upset. I knew that I had caused trouble, done evil, and offended God. When facing problems, I didn't seek the truth, and spread notions which led to everyone living in a state of negativity and passivity. I really did obstruct the church's work. Later when I reflected on my situation, I came upon this passage of God's words: **"Because, in their hearts, antichrists always doubt the divine essence of Christ, and always have a disobedient disposition,**

when Christ asks them to do things, they always scrutinize and discuss them, and ask people to determine whether they are right or wrong. Is this a grievous problem? (Yes.) They are not approaching these things from the perspective of submission to the truth; instead, they approach them in opposition to God. This is the disposition of the antichrists. When they hear the commands and work arrangements of Christ, they do not accept and submit to them, but start to discuss. And what is it they discuss? Do they discuss how to practice submission? (No.) They discuss whether the words and commands of Christ are right or wrong, and examine whether or not they should be carried out. Is their attitude one of actually wanting to carry these things out? No—they want to encourage more people to be like them, to not do these things. And is not doing them practicing the truth of submission? Obviously not. So what are they doing? (Opposing.) Not only are they themselves opposing God, they're looking for collective opposition, too. This is the nature of their actions, is it not? Collective opposition: making everyone the same as them, making everyone think the same as them, say the same as them, decide the same as them, collectively opposing Christ's decision and commands. This is the modus operandi of the antichrists. The antichrists' belief is, 'It's not a crime if everyone does it,' and so they urge others to oppose God together with him, thinking that with this being the case, there'll be nothing the house of God can do to them. Isn't this stupid? The antichrists' own ability to oppose God is extremely limited, they're all alone. So they try to recruit people to collectively oppose God, thinking in their hearts that 'I'll mislead a group of people, and make them think and act in the same way I do. Together, we will reject the words of Christ, and impede the words of God, and stop them from coming to fruition. And when someone comes

to check my work, I'll say that everyone decided to do it like this—and then we'll see how you handle that. I'm not going to do it for you, I'm not going to carry this out—and let's see what you do to me!' ... are these things that are manifested in the antichrists not hateful? (They are extremely hateful.) And what makes them hateful? These antichrists wish to seize power in the house of God; the words of Christ cannot be implemented by them, they will not carry them out. Of course, another kind of situation could also be involved when people are unable to submit to Christ's words: Some people are of poor caliber, they can't understand God's words when they hear them, and do not know how to carry them out; even if you teach them how to, they still can't. This is a different matter. The topic we're fellowshiping right now is the essence of antichrists, which doesn't relate to whether people are capable of doing things, or what their caliber is like; it relates to the disposition and essence of the antichrists. They are completely opposing Christ, the work arrangements of the house of God, and the truth principles. They have no submission, only opposition. This is what an antichrist is" (The Word, Vol. 4. Exposing Antichrists. Item Ten: They Despise the Truth, Brazenly Flout Principles, and Ignore the Arrangements of God's House (Part Four)). After reading God's words, I realized the serious nature of my actions, especially after seeing God's words expose how antichrists lack a submissive attitude toward, and never accept God's requirements and the work arrangements of God's house. Their hearts are full of resistance and confrontation, and they mislead others and gather them to oppose. Thinking back on how I acted these days, I saw my behavior was of the same nature as theirs. When the leaders followed up on our work in detail, I didn't want to take the trouble, and worried that it was wasting time I could spend doing my duty, impacting the work results. I couldn't accept that, so I spread prejudiced

opinions against the leaders and incited the sisters in our team to join me in a united front and oppose them. When the leaders pointed out that our progress was slow and our results lacking, and shared how to improve our work efficiency, I resisted, argued, and wouldn't submit. I felt the leaders' demands were excessive, and they didn't understand our real difficulties. When they fellowshiped on ways to improve our work efficiency, I wouldn't listen. To make the leaders relent, lower their demands, and understand that the poor work results were not solely because of me, I spread the idea among the brothers and sisters that the leaders' demands were too high, so that they would also feel that the leaders were making things difficult for us, and I incited them to join me in opposing. I was so deceitful, and said things full of ulterior motives and satanic trickery, using other people to achieve my objective. The leaders wanted a detailed understanding of our work to quickly discover and correct problems and deviations, help us work more effectively, and cultivate newcomers as soon as possible so they could do their duty. The leaders were doing specific work according to God's requirements and the church's arrangements. But I did not submit, and instead, I opposed. This was not making things difficult for the leaders, but actually opposing the church's work and God's requirements, and standing in complete opposition to Him. I misled and incited everyone into taking my side so they would think the way I thought, and say the same things I said, opposing the church's arrangements together. What I'd revealed was the disposition of an antichrist, and I played the role of a servant of Satan! I spoke negatively to mislead the brothers and sisters so that everyone stopped thinking about making progress, and was satisfied with the status quo, doing their duty in a perfunctory way every day, and the watering work always produced poor results. I was doing evil by obstructing and disturbing the church's work.

When I realized that, I started to be afraid. If I kept on doing that I would only do even more evil, ultimately become an antichrist, and be revealed and eliminated. I came before God and prayed, “Oh God, it was a clear sign of Your righteousness that I was dismissed. Through being exposed and judged by Your words, I have come to a better understanding of my antichrist disposition. Through my dismissal, You protected me, and even more, You saved me. I am grateful to You!”

Thereafter, I found two more passages of God’s words that exposed this facet of mankind’s corrupt disposition. Almighty God says: **“Antichrists often unleash a set of theories to mislead people, and no matter which work task they implement, they have the final say, completely violating the truth principles. Looking at it from the manifestations of antichrists, what exactly is their disposition? Are they people who love positive things and love the truth? Do they have true submission toward God? (No.) Their essence is one of being averse to and hating the truth. Moreover, they are so arrogant that they lose all rationality, even lacking the basic conscience and reason that people should have. Such people are not worthy to be called human. They can only be said to be those of Satan’s ilk; they are devils. Anyone who doesn’t accept the truth in the slightest is a devil—this is beyond all doubt”** (The Word, Vol. 4. Exposing Antichrists. Item Ten: They Despise the Truth, Brazenly Flout Principles, and Ignore the Arrangements of God’s House (Part Four)). **“In the hearts of the antichrists, what is their attitude toward practicing the truth and submitting to Christ? One word: opposition. They keep opposing. And what is the disposition contained within this opposition? What gives rise to it? Disobedience is what gives rise to it. In terms of disposition, this is aversion to the truth, it is having disobedience in their hearts, it is them not wanting to submit. And so, what do the antichrists think, in**

their hearts, when the house of God asks that leaders and workers learn to work together in harmony, instead of one person calling all the shots, that they learn how to discuss with others? ‘It’s too much trouble discussing everything with people! I can make the decisions about these things. Working with others, talking it over with them, doing things according to principle—how wimpy, how embarrassing!’ The antichrists think that they understand the truth, that everything is clear to them, that they have their own insights and ways of doing things, and so they are incapable of collaborating with others, they don’t discuss anything with people, they do everything their own way, and don’t yield to anyone else! Although the antichrists verbally declare that they are willing to submit and are willing to collaborate with others, no matter how good their answers appear on the outside, how nice-sounding their words, they are unable to change their rebellious state, are unable to change their satanic dispositions. Inside, however, they are ferociously oppositional—to what extent? If explained in the language of knowledge, this is a phenomenon that occurs when two things of different natures are put together: repulsion, which we can interpret as ‘opposition.’ This is precisely the disposition of antichrists: opposition to the Above. They like to oppose the Above and they obey no one” (The Word, Vol. 4. Exposing Antichrists. Item Ten: They Despise the Truth, Brazenly Flout Principles, and Ignore the Arrangements of God’s House (Part Four)). God says that hating the truth and opposing God is the nature essence of an antichrist, and I realized that I was revealing the disposition of an antichrist. I was annoyed by and resistant to the leaders’ supervision. I felt that it wasted our time, and they were asking too much of us by letting us improve our work results. I did not want to obey, and continued to oppose. Actually, the leaders were pointing out the problems and deviations in our work, and

I should have accepted it and earnestly reflected on the underlying reasons for such poor work results: whether it was a negligent attitude toward doing my duty, or that I couldn't see through things, and couldn't use the truth to resolve the brothers' and sisters' difficulties and problems. After finding the reasons, I should have quickly turned things around and changed. But I didn't accept the truth or reflect at all, and I didn't blame myself or feel guilty for not doing my duty well. To avoid being dismissed, I tried everything to incite everyone to join me in opposing the leaders. God requires that the leaders follow up on and supervise the work, which is a positive thing. But I resisted and opposed. From the outside, it looked like I was resisting the leaders, but essentially, I was averse to the truth and hated positive things, and was obstructing and disrupting the church's work. Seeing how I was averse to the truth and even opposing God, I realized how terrible my satanic disposition was! I thought about certain antichrists who were expelled from the church. When they were helped, corrected, and pruned, they never accepted the truth or reflected on themselves. If anyone supervised their work or gave them suggestions, they would fly into a rage due to feeling humiliated, and then they saw that person as an enemy. They would stubbornly rant and rave, oppose to the very end, and even do evil that seriously harmed the church's work, yet they felt no remorse. Ultimately, they were expelled by the church. This was all caused by their antichrist nature, which was averse to and hated the truth. Didn't I reveal the same disposition as those antichrists? If I didn't repent, sooner or later I would also be revealed by God and eliminated.

Later, I also pondered: Why had I incited the sisters to oppose the leaders' supervision? What was the root cause of that? In my seeking, I came upon this passage of God's words: **"Until people have experienced God's work and understood the truth, it is Satan's nature that takes**

charge and dominates them from within. What, specifically, does that nature entail? For example, why are you selfish? Why do you protect your own position? Why do you have such strong feelings? Why do you enjoy those unrighteous things? Why do you like those evils? What is the basis for your fondness for such things? Where do these things come from? Why are you so happy to accept them? By now, you have all come to understand that the main reason behind all these things is that Satan's poison is within man. So what is Satan's poison? How can it be expressed? For example, if you ask, 'How should people live? What should people live for?' people will answer, 'Every man for himself and the devil take the hindmost.' This single phrase expresses the very root of the problem. Satan's philosophy and logic have become people's lives. No matter what people pursue, they do so for themselves—and so they live only for themselves. 'Every man for himself and the devil take the hindmost'—this is the life philosophy of man, and it also represents human nature. These words have already become the nature of corrupt mankind and they are the true portrait of corrupt mankind's satanic nature. This satanic nature has already become the basis for corrupt mankind's existence. For several thousand years, corrupt mankind has lived by this venom of Satan, right up to the present day. Everything that Satan does is for the sake of its own desires, ambitions, and aims. It wishes to surpass God, to break free of God, and to seize control of all things created by God. Today, such is the extent that people have been corrupted by Satan: They all have satanic natures, they all try to deny and oppose God, and they want to control their own fates and try to oppose the orchestrations and arrangements of God. Their ambitions and desires are exactly the same as Satan's. Therefore, man's nature is Satan's nature'' (The Word, Vol. 3. The

Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. How to Walk the Path of Peter). After I finished reading God's words, I realized that the main reason I acted that way was because of my satanic nature, the satanic disposition within me. I lived by the satanic philosophy that says, "Every man for himself and the devil take the hindmost," and had become incredibly selfish and deceitful. Everything I did and said was to protect myself and safeguard my interests. I was afraid that when the leaders supervised our work and discovered problems in how I did my duty, I would be dismissed. So I connived and plotted, sowing dissatisfaction against the leaders, winning over and inciting the brothers and sisters to join me in a united front to oppose the leaders' supervision. That would let the leaders know that it wasn't just me who had low work efficiency, but it was a collective problem. To safeguard my status, I thought about how to deal with the leaders and protect myself, which harmed the church's work. The more I reflected, the more I felt my lack of humanity. In my heart, I felt deep remorse, and prayed to God, "Oh God! I have committed evil and disturbed the church's work. I am willing to fully repent, accept the leaders' supervision and guidance, and conscientiously fulfill my duty as a created being."

Through reading God's words, I later came to understand how to correctly treat the leaders' supervision and guidance. Almighty God says: **"Although, today, many people do a duty, there are only a few who pursue the truth. Very few people pursue the truth and enter reality as they do their duty; for most, there are still no principles to the way they do things, they are still not people who truly submit to God; they merely claim that they love the truth, and are willing to pursue the truth, and are willing to strive for the truth, yet it is still unknown how long their resolve will last. People who do not pursue the truth are liable to reveal their corrupt dispositions at any time or place. They are**

devoid of any sense of responsibility toward their duty, they are often perfunctory, they act as they wish, and are even incapable of accepting pruning. As soon as they become negative and weak, they are liable to abandon their duty—this happens often, nothing is more common; such is the way all who do not pursue the truth behave. And so, when people have yet to gain the truth, they are unreliable and untrustworthy. What does it mean that they are untrustworthy? It means that when they encounter difficulties or setbacks, they are likely to fall down, and to become negative and weak. Is someone who is often negative and weak someone who is trustworthy? Definitely not. But people who understand the truth are different. People who truly understand the truth are bound to have a God-fearing heart, and a heart of submission to God, and only people with a God-fearing heart are trustworthy people; people without a God-fearing heart are not trustworthy. How should people without a God-fearing heart be approached? They should, of course, be given loving assistance and support. They should be followed up on more as they do their duty, and given more help and instruction; only then can they be guaranteed to do their duty effectively. And what is the aim of doing this? The chief aim is to uphold the work of God's house. Secondary to this is in order to promptly identify problems, to promptly provide to them, support them, or prune them, setting right their deviations, and making up for their shortcomings and deficiencies. This is beneficial to people; there is nothing malicious about it. Supervising people, observing them, trying to understand them—this is all in order to help them enter the right track of faith in God, to enable them to do their duty as God asks and according to principle, to stop them from causing any disturbances or disruptions, and to stop them from doing futile work. The aim of doing

this is entirely about showing responsibility toward them and toward the work of God's house; there is no malice to it" (The Word, Vol. 5. The Responsibilities of Leaders and Workers. The Responsibilities of Leaders and Workers (7)). **"The house of God supervises, observes, and tries to understand those who do a duty. Are you able to accept this principle of the house of God? (Yes.) It is a wonderful thing if you can accept God's house supervising, observing, and trying to understand you. It is of help to you in fulfilling your duty, in being able to do your duty in a way that is up to standard and to satisfy God's intentions. It benefits and helps you, without any downside at all. Once you have understood this principle, should you not then no longer have any feelings of resistance or guardedness against the supervision of leaders, workers, and God's chosen people? Even though sometimes someone tries to understand you, observes you, and supervises your work, this is not something to take personally. Why do I say this? Because the tasks that are now yours, the duty you perform, and any work that you do are not the private affairs or personal job of any one person; they touch on the work of God's house and relate to one part of God's work. Therefore, when anyone spends a little time supervising or observing you, or gets to understand you on a deep level, trying to have a heart-to-heart with you and find out what your state has been like during this time, and even sometimes when their attitude is a little harsher, and they prune, discipline, and reproach you a bit, this is all because they have a conscientious and responsible attitude toward the work of the house of God. You should not have any negative thoughts or emotions toward this. What does it mean if you can accept it when others supervise, observe, and try to understand you? That, in your heart, you accept the scrutiny of God. If you do not accept people's supervision, observation, and attempts to**

understand you—if you push back against all this—are you able to accept the scrutiny of God? The scrutiny of God is more detailed, in-depth, and accurate than when people try to understand you; God’s requirements are more specific, exacting, and in-depth. If you cannot accept being supervised by God’s chosen people, are your claims that you can accept God’s scrutiny not empty words? For you to be able to accept God’s scrutiny and examination, you must first accept being supervised by the house of God, the leaders and workers, or the brothers and sisters” (The Word, Vol. 5. The Responsibilities of Leaders and Workers. The Responsibilities of Leaders and Workers (7)). Through God’s words I realized that because of the satanic corrupt disposition within us, we often do our duty as we please. And given our serious scumminess and laziness, in doing our duty we are often perfunctory, don’t strive to achieve results, and violate principles in many areas. We therefore need more supervision and follow-up on our work by leaders and workers to ensure that all items of the church’s work progress smoothly. That is what God requires of leaders and workers—that’s their job. I should have submitted to and accepted supervision and guidance from the leaders and workers. I also had the wrong point of view, feeling that the leaders’ constant supervision and detailed questioning would waste time that we could be using to do our duty, which would impact our work results. But in fact, the leaders wanted a detailed understanding of our work to find problems, help us to resolve them and rectify deviations, which would make our work more effective. It was not a waste of time. For example, one time when the leaders were following up on our work, they discovered that in watering newcomers we lacked a sense of caring and patience, and our demands on them were too high. That made some newcomers negative, and they did not do their duty. We only realized our own deviations in doing our duty through the leaders’

fellowshipping and guidance. Thereafter, we found God's words directed toward the newcomers' difficulties to fellowship with them so they would understand the meaning of doing one's duty, and we made reasonable arrangements for their duties based on their actual stature. Afterward, the newcomers' state improved, and they were able to do their duty normally. I saw that the leaders' supervision and guidance not only did not negatively impact our work results, but also helped us to grasp principles in doing our duty. These were all benefits of accepting supervision and guidance from leaders and workers about our work. I understood that accepting supervision from leaders and workers is a responsible attitude toward the church's work, and an essential principle of practice in doing one's duty.

Some time later, the leaders arranged for me to continue watering newcomers, and my heart was full of gratitude to God. After that, whenever the leaders followed up and provided guidance about the work, I wasn't so resistant. I could combine the issues the leaders discovered and proactively discuss them together with my partnered brothers and sisters, and we summarized the deviations in our duty. As we saw the existing issues more clearly, our work gradually became more effective. I truly felt that to get good results in doing our duty, we must accept the supervision and guidance from the leaders and workers, adopt an attitude of acceptance toward the truth, and act according to the truth principles. Thanks be to God!

37. What Stopped Me From Practicing the Truth

By Pamela, Italy

I partner with several others in the church to do graphic design work. One day, the leader said to me that two sisters had mentioned issues with Brother Oliver, saying that he liked things to be done his way and was slowing down the pace of work. The leader asked me if I'd discovered these problems when working with him. I remembered how when I worked with Oliver, I could see that he definitely clung to his own opinions. When everyone had discussed and decided on some designs according to the principles, he would always have a different opinion, but had no clear perspectives. Everyone needed to think along with him and it wasted a lot of time. There were also some relatively minor issues with the pictures which could be corrected later, and which we didn't need to take up everyone's time to discuss them, but he insisted that we solve them before moving on. He would delay things until everyone had reached a consensus, which made progress relatively slow. So, I told the leader about the problems I had seen. The leader reprimanded me when she saw that I'd known about these problems all along, saying, "You knew that Oliver was doing things his way and slowing down work, so why didn't you restrict him rather than appeasing and going along with him? Isn't this delaying work?" The leader's words made me feel bad.

I thought back to when I was discussing the designs with Oliver. I saw that he clung to his own opinions and it made me worried. I wanted to point out his problem, but then I remembered how I was an arrogant person to begin with. The leader had pruned me before too, telling me to forsake myself and cooperate with others, because I was always arrogant and self-righteous, clung to my own opinions, and argued with my partnered sisters,

delaying work. If I pointed out Oliver's problems in front of everyone, or refuted his opinions, people might think that I was still arrogant and lacked reason, and that I was unable to calmly take others' suggestions or cooperate with others. So, no matter how long things were delayed, I patiently listened to what Oliver said. Sometimes, when we considered his suggestions according to principles, we felt it wasn't doable. We would point out where the issue was, but he wouldn't take it well, and still insist on his views. If we didn't do as he suggested he would get upset and not speak, making it extremely awkward and putting a halt on work. Originally I wanted to tell the leader. But I thought that since the leader had just pruned me for my arrogance and inability to cooperate with the others, if I were to report someone else's problems, the leader might think that I was focusing on other people's problems and nit-picking, that nothing had changed after she pruned me. In that case, how much longer could I do my duty? At this thought, I didn't report or point out Oliver's problem. As a result, because we couldn't agree and were always negotiating and discussing back and forth, we ended up spending a day on something that could clearly be finished in half a day, making the pace of work slow. Thinking of these things made me feel guilty and I blamed myself. It's not that I hadn't noticed Oliver's problem, but I held back and never pointed it out to him. I thought of a passage from God's word: **"Once the truth has become life in you, when you observe someone who is blasphemous toward God, unfearful of God, and perfunctory while performing their duty, or who disrupts and disturbs church work, you will respond according to the truth principles, and will be able to identify and expose them as necessary. If the truth has not become your life, and you still live within your satanic disposition, then when you discover evil people and devils who cause disruptions and disturbances to the work**

of the church, you will turn a blind eye and a deaf ear; you will brush them aside, without reproach from your conscience. You will even think that anyone causing disturbances to the work of the church has nothing to do with you. No matter how much the work of the church and the interests of the house of God suffer, you don't care, intervene, or feel guilty—which makes you someone who has no conscience or reason, a disbeliever, a laborer. You eat what is of God's, drink what is of God's, and enjoy all that comes from God, yet feel that any harm to the interests of the house of God is not related to you—which makes you a traitor who bites the hand that feeds you. If you do not protect the interests of the house of God, are you even human? This is a demon that has insinuated itself into the church. You feign belief in God, pretend to be a chosen one, and you want to freeload in God's house. You are not living the life of a human being, are more like a fiend than a person, and are clearly one of the disbelievers. If you are someone who truly believes in God, then even if you have yet to gain the truth and life, at the very least you will speak and act from the side of God; at the very least, you will not stand idly by when you see the interests of the house of God being compromised. When you have the urge to turn a blind eye, you will feel guilty, and ill at ease, and will say to yourself, 'I can't sit here and do nothing, I must stand up and say something, I must take responsibility, I must expose this evil behavior, I must stop it, so that the interests of the house of God are not harmed, and the church life is not disturbed.' If the truth has become your life, then not only will you have this courage and resolve, and will you be capable of understanding the matter completely, but you will also fulfill the responsibility you should bear for God's work and for the interests of His house, and your duty will thereby be fulfilled" (The Word, Vol. 3. The

Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. Part Three). From God's words, I saw that those with a conscience who truly believe in God are of one heart with God and side with Him when encountering things. If they see someone disrupting and disturbing the church's work, they can stand up and expose and stop them. They protect the church's work. But me? I clearly saw that Oliver was clinging to his opinions and not accepting others' opinions. He slowed the pace of work time and time again, yet in order to avoid people saying I was arrogant and picked fights, not only did I not stop and resolve it, or offer pointers and help, I just stood idly by, turning a blind eye. I thought only of protecting my own interests, rather than the effectiveness of our work. As a result, work was delayed. On the surface, I was busily doing my duty every day. But in reality, I was not truly bearing a burden in my duty, and was not loyal to God at all. Disasters are growing in scale, and many people are starting to seek and investigate the true way. If we can quicken our pace and make more gospel photos, then we can do our small part for gospel work. But I was not considering God's intention. For so long I watched on as the pace of work got delayed, and did not stop or solve it in a timely manner. I was so lacking in conscience and humanity, and was just like **"a traitor who bites the hand that feeds you,"** which was exposed in God's word. I used the church as a meal ticket, and was useless in critical moments. When I realized this, I was filled with regret, and prayed to God, "God, I neglected the church's work to protect myself. I am willing to repent to You. Please lead me to truly know myself."

Later, I began to reflect on why it was so hard for me to practice the truth, and what was stopping me. I ate and drank two passages of God's words that applied to my state: **"Some people follow their own will when they act. They violate the principles, and after being pruned, they admit in mere words that they are arrogant, and that they made a**

mistake only because they do not have the truth. But in their hearts, they complain, ‘No one else sticks their neck out, just me—and in the end, when something goes wrong, they push all the responsibility onto me. Isn’t this stupid of me? I can’t do the same thing next time, sticking my neck out like that. The bird that sticks its neck out is the one that gets shot!’ What do you think of this attitude? Is it an attitude of repentance? (No.) What attitude is it? Haven’t they become slippery and deceitful? In their hearts they think, ‘I’m lucky this time it didn’t turn into a disaster. A fall into the pit, a gain in your wit, so to speak. I have to be more careful in the future.’ They do not seek the truth, using their petty tricks and cunning schemes to attend to and handle the matter. Can they gain the truth in this way? They cannot, because they **have not repented**” (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. Only by Pursuing the Truth Can One Resolve Their Notions and Misunderstandings of God). **“When people take no responsibility toward their duties, do them in a perfunctory manner, act like people pleasers, and do not defend the interests of the house of God, what disposition is this? This is cunningness, it is the disposition of Satan. The most prominent aspect of man’s philosophies for worldly dealings is cunningness. People think that if they are not cunning, they will be liable to offend others and unable to protect themselves; they think that they must be cunning enough not to hurt or offend anyone, thereby keeping themselves safe, protecting their livelihoods, and gaining a firm foothold among other people. Nonbelievers all live by Satan’s philosophies. They are all people pleasers and do not offend anyone. You have come to the house of God, read the word of God, and listened to the sermons of God’s house, so why are you unable to practice the truth, speak from the heart, and be an honest person? Why are you always a people pleaser?**

People pleasers only protect their own interests, and not the interests of the church. When they see someone do evil and harm the church's interests, they ignore it. They like to be people pleasers, and do not offend anyone. This is irresponsible, and that kind of person is too cunning and untrustworthy" (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. Part Three). God's words touched my heart, and I finally saw that the root of my not being able to practice the truth or uphold its principles, was that my nature was too deceitful. Ever since the leader had pruned me for my arrogance, I had never truly reflected on myself or sought the path to fix my arrogant disposition. Instead, I schemed and used superficial tolerance and deference to protect myself, making others mistakenly think that I was low-key and that my arrogant disposition had changed. That way the leader wouldn't prune me again or dismiss me. I saw that living by satanic ideas and views like "The bird that sticks its neck out is the one that gets shot," "Silence is golden, speech is silver, and he who talks a lot errs a lot," and "Seek not merit, but to avoid blame," had made me extremely selfish, despicable, crafty and deceitful. I clearly saw that Oliver's problem had already impacted our work. I should have stood up and exposed and stopped it. But instead, I acted like a people pleaser to dissolve conflict. When faced with problems or discord, I said as little as possible. I never argued with people, and did not uphold the principles at all. I protected my own interests well, but let the church's work suffer losses. I was so treacherous and deceitful. I truly incurred God's disgust and hate. Especially when I read God's words: **"They do not seek the truth, using their petty tricks and cunning schemes to attend to and handle the matter. Can they gain the truth in this way? They cannot, because they have not repented"** (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. Only by Pursuing the Truth Can One Resolve Their Notions and Misunderstandings of God), I felt even

more remorseful. Before, I did my duty with an arrogant disposition. I always upheld my own views, and didn't listen to others' suggestions. Not only did this constrict others, it also affected the church's work. The leader pruned me so that I could reflect on myself and know myself, so that I could change my ways in a timely manner and do my duty well. But I didn't repent. Instead, I shielded myself from God and others. Not only did I not do my duty well, I didn't even care when the church's work was disturbed. I could see that in no way was I someone who accepted the truth. If this continued, my corrupt disposition would only worsen, and eventually I would be revealed and eliminated! At this thought, I was scared, and quickly prayed to God, "God, I am no longer willing to protect my own interests through these philosophies for worldly dealings. I am willing to seek the truth and fix my corrupt disposition. I ask You to help me find the path to practice."

After that, I read a passage of God's words: **"If you wish to avoid arguments, is compromise the only way? In what situations can you compromise? If it has to do with small matters, such as your own self-interest or your pride, then there is no need to argue about it. You can choose to be tolerant or to compromise. But with matters that can affect the church's work and harm the interests of the house of God, you must stick to the principles. If you do not observe this tenet, then you are not being loyal to God. If you choose to compromise and abandon the truth principles in order to save face or preserve your interpersonal relationships, is this not selfish and base of you? Is it not a sign of being irresponsible in your duty and disloyal to God? (It is.) So, if a time comes during the course of your duty when everyone is in disagreement, how should you practice? Is arguing about it with all your might going to solve the problem? (No.) Then how should you**

resolve the problem? In this situation, a person who understands the truth should come forward to resolve the issue, first laying the issue on the table and letting both sides say their piece. Then, everybody is to seek the truth together, and after praying to God, the relevant truth in God's words is to be brought out to fellowship on. After they have fellowshiped on the truth principles and gained clarity, both sides will be able to submit. ... If a person gets into conflicts and debates with others in order to protect the interests of the house of God and the effectiveness of the church's work, and their attitude is a bit unyielding, would you say that is a problem? (No.) Because their intent is right; it is to protect the interests of God's house. This is a person who stands on God's side and sticks to the truth principles, a person in whom God delights. Having a strong, resolute attitude when protecting the interests of the house of God is a sign of a firm stance and sticking to the principles, and God approves of it. People may feel there is a problem with this attitude, but it is not a big one; it does not have to do with the revelation of a corrupt disposition. Remember, sticking to the truth principles is what is most important" (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. Only in the Practice of the Truth Is There Life Entry). After reading God's words, I understood that no matter when, being able to forsake one's personal gain, uphold the truth principles, and protect the church's work is the most important thing. Even if you sometimes get into conflicts with people because of this, or speak a bit harshly, none of these are big issues. What God looks at is our attitude toward the truth. He looks at whether we can uphold the truth principles, and whether we practice the truth. Before, I always thought that if upholding principles caused conflict, I must be displaying an arrogant disposition and not cooperating harmoniously with others. So, in order to avoid others saying that I was arrogant, I

compromised on everything, and did nothing to uphold the principles. Now I finally understood that the best path of practice to avoid arguments and conflict is to practice according to the principles, to have each person speak their viewpoints, and then seek the truth together. If, after seeking, you are sure your actions are in line with the truth principles, then you should uphold them. This is proper. If your view is obviously wrong, but you insist on upholding it, and make people listen to you and accept it, this is a display of arrogance and self-righteousness. At this point, you should learn to forsake yourself. Afterward, when I partnered with Oliver, I tried practicing God's words.

One day, I was picking images and discussing issues with Elliana and Oliver. Oliver put forward a suggestion. We felt the message that his overall design conveyed didn't quite fit with the theme, but we weren't quite sure. At first, I wanted to go along with it and compromise. I thought, "Then let's try your suggestion first and see what happens, lest everyone say I'm arrogant, self-righteous, and cling to my own opinions." But then I remembered some of the principles and requirements for the design, and felt that Oliver's concept really did have issues. If we were to do the design according to his concept and then had to redo it, wouldn't that be a waste of time and delay our work? At this point, I realized that I needed to uphold the principles, so I explained to Oliver the problems with his concept, and reminded him to follow the original concept, rather than cling to his own views. Elliana agreed, and Oliver said nothing further. But situations like this happened multiple times throughout the day. Whenever our opinions differed, Oliver always held onto his views, dragging out our work. Also, because we didn't change things according to his suggestions, he got upset again and barely spoke. I realized that if this kept up it would definitely delay our work, so I told the leader what was happening. The leader

planned to go find Oliver together with us to expose his problem, fellowship on the truth, and help him. I knew that this was my chance to practice the truth, so I read two passages of God's words before going to talk with Oliver: **"All the church's work is directly related to the work of spreading God's kingdom gospel. In particular, the work of spreading the gospel and all jobs that relate to professions have an important and inseparable connection with the work of spreading the gospel. Therefore, whatever involves the work of spreading the gospel involves the interests of God and the interests of God's house. If people can correctly understand the work of spreading the gospel, they should correctly approach the duties they do and the duties done by others. How to approach them correctly? Put in your best effort and do them in accordance with God's requirements. At the very least, don't engage in behaviors and practices that deliberately cause damage or disturbance, and don't intentionally do things that you know to be wrong. If someone insists on doing something even though they know it disrupts and disturbs the church's work, and no one can dissuade them from it, then they are doing evil, courting death, and showing their true colors as a devil. Hurry and make the brothers and sisters discern them for what they are, then clear the evil person out of the church. If the evildoer is in a moment of folly and isn't deliberately doing evil, how should such a matter be treated? Should the person be educated and helped? What if they are educated and still don't listen? The brothers and sisters come together to criticize them"** (The Word, Vol. 4. Exposing Antichrists. Item Nine (Part One)). **"You must focus on the truth—only then can you have life entry, and only when you have life entry can you provide for others and lead them. If it is discovered that others' actions are at odds with the truth, we must lovingly help them to strive for the truth.**

If others are able to practice the truth, and there are principles to the way they do things, we should try to learn from and emulate them. This is what mutual love is” (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. Only One Who Performs Their Duty Well With All Their Heart, Mind, and Soul Is One Who Loves God). God’s words are clear. When we notice other people’s problems, we must fellowship quickly, and expose and reprimand them if needed. This is all to protect the church’s work, and it is also to help people see their problems, solve them quickly, and do their duty well. Oliver did have some talent at drawing images, but his corrupt disposition caused him to unintentionally do things that disrupted and disturbed our work. If he was able to know himself, pursue the truth, change his corrupt disposition, cooperate with everyone harmoniously, and play to his strengths, then this would benefit the church’s work and his own life entry. So, I found several passages of God’s words that addressed Oliver’s issues, tied in my own experiences, and fellowshiped on it with him. After listening, he gained some knowledge of his corrupt disposition, even saying that sometimes he was aware he was in the wrong, but couldn’t rebel against himself. Now that I had pointed it out, he finally felt bad about it, and was willing to seek the truth and rely on God to change his corrupt disposition. When I heard this, I was happy for him. But at the same time, I regretted that I had lived according to philosophies for worldly dealings and not told him sooner. I had truly harmed him and the church’s work.

After that event, during the course of my duty, if I saw that someone did something that didn’t align with the truth principles and delayed work, I would consciously practice the truth and point out to them the problems I saw and fulfill my responsibility. Practicing this way made me feel at peace and relieved. Thank God!

38. Reporting Evil People

By Ma Jie, China

I was elected as a group leader in February of 2021, and not long after that, Sister Xin Yi spoke to me about the behavior of Liu Hua, the leader of her team. Xin Yi had noticed that Liu Hua wasn't doing any real work and that she would suppress and exclude those whose views didn't align with her own. When a brother exposed some of Liu Hua's problems, she seized upon the slightest imperfection in his duty and made a big fuss of it, singling him out and excluding him whenever possible, which caused him to sink into negativity. There was one sister who disagreed with Liu Hua and refused to listen to her during a work discussion. Liu Hua held a grudge against her and would often attack her. Whenever that sister disagreed with Liu Hua and refused to go along with her ideas, Liu Hua would scold and berate her. She even once pointed at her and viciously said, "You have poor caliber and yet you're still so meddlesome!" She relentlessly berated that sister to the point that she felt constrained and was afraid to do her duty alongside Liu Hua. Liu Hua had also attacked and sought revenge against other brothers and sisters who tried to give her suggestions or refused to follow her orders. She accused some of them of walking the path of an antichrist and punished others by deliberately not assigning them duties. These brothers and sisters really suffered as a result and felt oppressed. Her reckless suppression and punishment of those brothers and sisters had severely impacted the effectiveness of the church's work. I was furious when I heard about Liu Hua's behavior. After that, we spoke to those who were involved or knew about the situation and proved that all of these things were indeed true. Liu Hua had a sinister, malicious nature and a deep desire for status. She would hold a grudge and seek revenge on anyone who

threatened her status and reputation by not bending to her will or agreeing with her, and would attack, exclude, and punish them. I read some of God's words that say: **"It is only evil people and antichrists who are possessed of such a vicious disposition. When a vicious person is faced with any kind of well-intentioned exhortation, accusation, teaching or help, their attitude is not to be grateful or accept it humbly, but instead to become enraged from shame, and to feel extreme hostility, hatred, and to even retaliate. ... Of course, when they retaliate against another because of hatred, it is not because they have hatred toward or an old grudge against that person, but because that person has exposed their mistakes. This shows that the mere act of exposing an antichrist, regardless of who does so, and regardless of their relationship with the antichrist, can trigger their hatred and instigate their revenge. Regardless of who it is, whether they understand the truth, or whether they are a leader or worker or an ordinary member of God's chosen people, as long as anyone exposes and prunes the antichrist, they will treat that person as an enemy. They will even openly say, 'I'll go hard on whoever prunes me. Whoever prunes me, exposes the skeletons in my closet, gets me expelled by the house of god, or robs me of my share of blessings, I'll never leave them be'"** (The Word, Vol. 4. Exposing Antichrists. Item Nine (Part Eight)). **"No matter what mistakes they have made or bad things they have done, those people with vicious dispositions will not allow anyone to expose them or prune them. Should someone expose and offend them, they will become enraged, retaliate, and never let the issue drop. They have no patience and tolerance for other people, and do not exercise forbearance toward them. What principle is their conduct based on? 'I would rather betray than be betrayed.'** In other words, they do not tolerate being offended by anyone. Is this not the logic of

evil people? This is exactly the logic of evil people. No one is allowed to offend them. To them, it is unacceptable for anyone to trigger them in even the slightest way, and they hate anyone who does so. They will keep going after that person and never let the matter go—that is how evil people are” (The Word, Vol. 5. The Responsibilities of Leaders and Workers. The Responsibilities of Leaders and Workers (14)). Through God’s words, I saw that evil people have particularly malicious natures and that they hate the truth and those who pursue it. They bear grudges against whoever offends them, and find opportunities to attack them and take their revenge, excluding and punishing that person until they become negative and defeated. Based on Liu Hua’s consistent behavior, it was clear that she would attack and exclude anyone who disagreed with her or threatened her interests. She would also distort the facts to judge and condemn people relentlessly until they became negative. I saw that Liu Hua had malicious humanity and that, in essence, she was an evil person who hated the truth and did not accept it. She needed to be expelled from the church. I knew that I couldn’t sit by and watch while an evil person like Liu Hua wreaked havoc in the church and had to quickly report this, so later we reported Liu Hua’s problems to our supervisor.

Yet, much to my surprise, just a few days later, I received a letter from our supervisor, Meng Ran, saying, “Liu Hua is competent and able to resolve some real issues. Although she does act upon her corrupt disposition at times, which leaves people feeling constrained, as long as she is willing to change, she should be given a chance to repent.” I just couldn’t understand this. Liu Hua had clearly been doing evil. This was not a one-off transgression, she consistently behaved like that. No matter how the brothers and sisters fellowshiped and advised her, she didn’t repent at all and she even suppressed and punished them. According to God’s words,

Liu Hua was an evil person in essence, so why wouldn't Meng Ran do anything about her? It seemed like Meng Ran was flagrantly protecting an evil person. At that time, some brothers and sisters reported some of Meng Ran's evil deeds. A few years ago, Meng Ran had provoked dissension in the church, formed a faction, found things to use against the leaders and workers, and attacked them in order to grab a leadership position for herself. Her actions had disrupted the church life and she was asked to reflect in isolation accordingly. When this happened, Xin Yi had learned about Meng Ran's behavior, and then fellowshiped and discerned it with the brothers and sisters. Because of this, Meng Ran bore a grudge against her. Later on, Meng Ran pretended to repent in order to gain back the trust of the brothers and sisters, and became a supervisor. After that, she went to work taking revenge against Xin Yi. One time, when Xin Yi pointed out certain deviations and issues in Liu Hua's work, Liu Hua wouldn't give in and got into an argument with her. Meng Ran knew that Liu Hua had issues in her duty, but she chose to side with her and isolate and suppress Xin Yi. This left Xin Yi feeling very repressed and miserable, and she fell seriously ill. Afterward, not only did Meng Ran not reflect on herself, she even took the opportunity to mock Xin Yi, and unfairly labeled her as an antichrist by misusing God's words. She reprimanded Xin Yi harshly for walking the path of an antichrist and misled the other brothers and sisters into criticizing Xin Yi too. Based upon these actions, it was clear that Meng Ran had a vicious disposition.

Several days later, Meng Ran joined us at a gathering and defended Liu Hua, saying, "You can't say that this is just Liu Hua's problem, other people are at fault too. We should give her a chance to repent! She seems to be behaving quite well these days and has been very active in her duty...." When I tried to fellowship with Meng Ran about the principles for

discerning evil people, she didn't seem to listen to what I had said at all. This made us feel even more convinced that Meng Ran was consciously protecting Liu Hua. Meng Ran was a supervisor and she could clearly see that Liu Hua was an evil person, yet she didn't do anything about it, and acted as her shield instead. What's more, Meng Ran herself had a particularly malicious nature—she didn't accept the truth, she continually disrupted and disturbed the church's work, and she suppressed and punished the brothers and sisters. According to the principles, she was most likely an evil person too. Given the current situation, I knew that I should report this to my leader, and expose Meng Ran's and Liu Hua's actions to protect the church's interests. But then it occurred to me that Meng Ran was a supervisor—she might suppress me like she had the others if I offended her by reporting her problems. I might be dismissed before these issues were even resolved. If Meng Ran found an excuse to stop me from doing my duty, how would I continue to pursue the truth and attain salvation? Realizing this, I sighed and thought, “Well, as the saying goes, ‘The bird that sticks its neck out is the one that gets shot.’ I should just let this go. The less trouble, the better. Protecting myself is what matters.” I started to feel like backing down and compromising, and I didn't have the courage to practice the truth. But when I thought of the brothers and sisters being suppressed by Liu Hua and Meng Ran, and how they were living in constant suffering, I began to feel guilty. I went back and forth, unable to make up my mind—if I didn't report this matter, I wouldn't be protecting the church's interests, but if I did report it, I might be stripped of my duty, and then I wouldn't have good prospects or a good destination. At the time, I realized that there was something wrong with my state—wasn't I acting like a coward? I lacked a sense of justice and I wasn't showing consideration for God's intentions. I couldn't be so spineless and lacking in

conscience, I had to make a stand to protect the church's interests. But when it actually came time to report Liu Hua and Meng Ran, I felt timid and afraid, so I came before God and prayed, asking Him to guide me and give me faith and courage. After that, I recalled a passage of God's words: **"All of you say you are considerate of God's burden and will defend the testimony of the church, but who among you has really been considerate of God's burden? Ask yourself: Are you someone who has shown consideration for His burden? Can you practice righteousness for Him? Can you stand up and speak for Me? Can you steadfastly put the truth into practice? Are you bold enough to fight against all of Satan's deeds? Would you be able to set your feelings aside and expose Satan for the sake of My truth? Can you allow My intentions to be satisfied in you? Have you offered up your heart in the most crucial of moments? Are you someone who follows My will? Ask yourself these questions, and think about them often"** (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. Utterances of Christ in the Beginning, Chapter 13). When I thought about God's questions, I felt quite reproached. I often told others that we must be considerate of God's burden and have a sense of justice, that we must practice the truth, expose and report antichrists and evil people in order to protect the church's interests. But when something happened that threatened my own interests, I felt frightened and shrunk back. I had discerned that Liu Hua was an evil person, but when I saw that Meng Ran was protecting her, I felt intimidated by Meng Ran's status and authority and I didn't dare to hold to the principles. I worried that I'd be suppressed, stripped of my duty, and lose my opportunity to attain salvation, so I gave in to her status and authority. Wasn't I compromising with Satan and bowing my head to it? I wasn't protecting the church's interests in my duty, I was only considering my own prospects and fate. At this key moment, I hadn't prioritized the

church's interests, and I had stood idly by as evil people disrupted the church's work and suppressed the brothers and sisters. Wasn't I biting the hand that feeds? I was so selfish and despicable—where was my conscience and reason? As I considered all this, I became very remorseful and I knew that I had to make a stand and protect the church's interests. I had to report Liu Hua's and Meng Ran's evildoing; I couldn't let them continue to perpetrate evil in the church. After that, we reported Liu Hua and Meng Ran to our leader.

When the leader received our letter, she said that she would come to take care of the issue as soon as possible, but she ended up getting held up by some other matters. The days kept going by and I became impatient. I began to feel uneasy and wondered to myself, "Why is it taking so long for the leader to come and fix these issues? If she goes to inquire about the situation with other people first and Meng Ran finds out that we reported her, will Meng Ran punish us?" Just as I was feeling particularly tormented, I suddenly recalled a passage of God's words: **"When confronting real-life problems, how should you know and understand God's authority and His sovereignty? When you are faced with these problems and do not know how to understand, handle, and experience them, what attitude should you adopt to demonstrate your intention to submit, your desire to submit, and the reality of your submission to God's sovereignty and arrangements? First you must learn to wait; then you must learn to seek; then you must learn to submit"** (The Word, Vol. 2. On Knowing God. God Himself, the Unique III). As I pondered over God's words, I felt ashamed. I thought that when I reported the issue, it would be dealt with very quickly, so I started to worry when the leader's arrival kept getting delayed. I lived in a state of anxiety, thinking only of protecting myself without the slightest bit of true faith in God. By reading God's words, I understood that all things

occur due to God's sovereignty and arrangements. When we experience things, we must have faith in God's sovereignty and learn to wait and submit. After realizing this, I prayed to God, entrusting this matter to Him and looking up to Him. To my surprise, soon after, Liu Hua was forced to resign for a number of reasons, including her inability to do real work. After that, the brothers and sisters were freed from her suppression and could do their duties normally. I saw that everything was in God's hands, that it was all the result of His sovereignty and arrangements, and my faith grew stronger. But although Liu Hua had resigned, her evildoing still hadn't been classified and handled, and Meng Ran's issues still hadn't been resolved. I knew we should keep reporting this until these problems were solved once and for all.

Several days later, Xia Yu, our leader, came to look into the situation and we informed her about the details of Liu Hua's and Meng Ran's evildoing. And yet, when we discussed Meng Ran's behavior, we were shocked to find that Xia Yu didn't agree with dismissing her. She claimed that Meng Ran was quite competent and even said, "Do you think it's easy to cultivate a supervisor? We spent nearly two years cultivating Meng Ran. If we dismiss her just because you ask us to, where are we supposed to find her replacement? You think it's easy doing our work?" Hearing this, I thought, "You're only considering Meng Ran's surface-level competence and failing to take into account her humanity and her nature essence. If you don't discern and handle people based on their essence, where are the principles in that?" After that, Xia Yu said that she needed to look into the matter further and the gathering was promptly concluded. Later, we fellowshiped with Meng Ran twice more, but not only would she not accept it, she even pruned us. I saw that Meng Ran consistently refused to accept being pruned, and that she was averse to and hated the truth—she

was showing herself to be an evil person. Yet, when we reported the situation to our leader, we were once again completely shocked by her response. Xia Yu wrote to us saying that Liu Hua had indeed done some evil deeds, but she was showing willingness to repent. Xia Yu said that she didn't think Liu Hua was an evil person in essence, but that she simply had a very corrupt disposition. She told us that Liu Hua should be given another chance to repent. The letter also stated that although Meng Ran showed some behaviors of an evil person, these were just revelations of her corrupt disposition. At the end of the letter, Xia Yu urged us to reflect on and gain knowledge of ourselves, treat people fairly, and do more to help others. After reading the letter, I was stunned, and I felt repressed and dejected. If Xia Yu didn't agree to do something about Liu Hua and Meng Ran, they would be free to continue tyrannizing the church, punishing and suppressing the brothers and sisters, and disrupting the church's work. Wasn't Xia Yu condoning the evildoing of evil people? I thought that since Xia Yu was a leader, she would help us take care of these evil people and protect the brothers and sisters. I never imagined that she would approach the issue in this way. It was very upsetting to see nothing being done about Liu Hua and Meng Ran, and I didn't know what to do next. I was in a difficult position—I didn't want to be involved in this matter anymore, but I felt uneasy and that I should persist in reporting it to the upper levels. But things were getting more and more complicated; I couldn't afford to offend a supervisor, much less a leader. If I kept reporting these issues, would I end up facing the consequences? Them making life hard for me would be the least of my worries—they might even strip me of my duty, suppress, and expel me. How would I attain salvation then? The more I thought about it, the more worried, frightened, repressed, and agonized I felt. I realized that

my state was wrong and hurriedly prayed to God, asking Him to guide me to practice the truth.

One day, I came across a passage of God's words that said: **“What is the attitude that people should have in terms of how to treat a leader or worker? If what a leader or worker does is right and in line with the truth, then you can obey them; if what they do is wrong and not in line with the truth, then you should not obey them and you can expose them, oppose them and raise a different opinion. If they are unable to do actual work or do evil deeds that cause a disturbance to church work, and are revealed to be a false leader, a false worker, or an antichrist, then you can discern, expose and report them. However, some of God's chosen people do not understand the truth and are particularly cowardly; they fear being suppressed and tormented by false leaders and antichrists, so they don't dare uphold principles. They say, ‘If the leader kicks me out, I'm finished; if he has everyone expose or forsake me, then I will no longer be able to believe in God. If I'm expelled from the church, then God will not want me and will not save me. And won't my faith have been for nothing?’ Is such thinking not ridiculous? Do such people have true faith in God? Would a false leader or antichrist be representing God when they expel you? When a false leader or antichrist torments and expels you, this is the work of Satan, and has nothing to do with God; when people are cleared out or expelled from the church, this is only in line with God's intentions when there is a joint decision between the church and all of God's chosen people, and when the clearing out or expulsion is wholly in line with the work arrangements of God's house and the truth principles of God's words. How could being expelled by a false leader or antichrist mean you cannot be saved? This is the persecution of Satan and the**

antichrist, and does not mean that you will not be saved by God. Whether or not you can be saved depends on God. No human being is qualified to decide whether you can be saved by God. You must be clear about this. And to treat your expulsion by a false leader or antichrist as being expelled by God—is this not misinterpreting God? It is. And this is not only misinterpreting God, but also rebelling against God. It is also kind of blasphemous against God. And is misinterpreting God in this way not ignorant and foolish? When a false leader or antichrist expels you, why do you not seek the truth? Why don't you seek out somebody who understands the truth in order to gain some discernment? And why do you not report this to the higher-ups? This proves that you do not believe that the truth reigns supreme in the house of God, it shows that you do not have true faith in God, that you are not someone who truly believes in God. If you trust in the almightiness of God, why do you fear the retaliation of a false leader or antichrist? Can they determine your fate? If you are capable of discernment, and detect that their actions are at odds with the truth, why not fellowship with God's chosen people who understand the truth? You have a mouth, so why do you dare not speak up? Why are you so afraid of a false leader or antichrist? This proves that you are a coward, a good-for-nothing, a lackey of Satan. ... If you believe in God, but instead of submitting to God, you give in to and take shelter in God's enemies—the antichrists—and the result is that you are manipulated and abused by these antichrists, then you have brought this upon yourself. Do you not deserve it? If you treat the antichrist as your master, as your leader, as a shoulder to lean on, then you are taking refuge in Satan, you are following Satan, which means you have gone astray, and taken the wrong path, and set foot upon the road of no

return. What attitude should you have toward antichrists? You should expose them, and do battle with them. If there's only one or two of you and you're too weak to face the antichrists alone, you should join forces with several people who understand the truth to report and expose these antichrists, and should keep going until they are cleared out" (The

Word, Vol. 4. Exposing Antichrists. Item Three: They Exclude and Attack Those Who Pursue the Truth). God's words exposed my incorrect viewpoints. When it came to reporting these evil people, I had failed to uphold the principles, practice the truth, and protect the church's interests time and time again, because I was afraid that the leaders and workers would suppress me, give me a hard time, or even condemn and expel me, and thus deprive me of the opportunity to attain salvation. As a result, I just turned a blind eye to their actions, and didn't dare to uphold the principles and keep reporting and exposing them. I often talked about how the truth and Christ reign in God's house, but when faced with an actual situation, I lacked true knowledge and faith in God, and didn't believe that God rules over all things and governs our fates. I viewed the status and power of evil people as very significant, and I feared them. In fact, no matter how much status and authority false leaders, antichrists, and evil people attain, they still cannot control our destinies or decide if we attain salvation. No matter how savage they become, they cannot surpass God's authority. Even if I was suppressed by evil people and couldn't do my duty temporarily, that didn't mean I'd lose my chance of being saved. God scrutinizes all things—so as long as I pursue and practice the truth, I can ultimately still attain God's salvation. What's more, these evil people cannot gain a solid footing in the church and they will all eventually be exposed and eliminated. But I had mistakenly believed that a leader controlled my prospects and destiny, and that as soon as I offended her, I would lose my duty and any chance of attaining

salvation. How foolish and muddled I was! In what way did I have true faith in God? At that point, I reflected on why I hadn't been able to practice the truth in this matter, and what the source of my issue was.

Later on, I came across this passage of God's words: **"Satan corrupts people through the education and influence of national governments and of the famous and great. Their devilish words have become man's life and nature. 'Every man for himself and the devil take the hindmost' is a well-known satanic saying that has been instilled into everyone, and this has become man's life. There are other words of philosophies for worldly dealings that are also like this. Satan uses each nation's traditional culture to educate, mislead, and corrupt people, causing mankind to fall into and be engulfed by a boundless abyss of destruction, and in the end, people are destroyed by God because they serve Satan and resist God. ... There are still many satanic poisons in people's lives, conduct, and behavior. For example, their philosophies for worldly dealings, their ways of doing things, and their maxims are all filled with the poisons of the great red dragon, and these all come from Satan. Thus, all things that flow through people's bones and blood are of Satan. All of those officials, those who hold power, and those who are accomplished have their own paths and secrets to success. Are such secrets not perfectly representative of their nature? They have done such big things in the world, and no one can see through the schemes and intrigues that lay behind them. This shows just how insidious and venomous their nature is. Mankind has been profoundly corrupted by Satan. Satan's venom flows through the blood of every person, and it can be said that man's nature is corrupt, wicked, antagonistic, and in opposition to God, filled by and immersed in the philosophies and poisons of Satan. It has become, entirely, the nature essence of Satan.**

This is why people resist God and stand in opposition to God. Man can easily come to know themselves if their nature can be dissected in this way” (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. How to Know Man’s Nature).

Through the exposure of God’s words, I discovered the root cause of my inability to practice the truth: I had been too deeply corrupted by Satan. From a young age, I had been educated in school and conditioned by society, which had instilled me with many of Satan’s poisons, such as: “Every man for himself and the devil take the hindmost,” “The less trouble, the better,” “Let things drift if they do not affect one personally,” and “Sensible people are good at self-protection, seeking only to avoid making mistakes.” Because I was living according to these satanic poisons, I always protected my own interests and considered my prospects and destiny first when things befell me, instead of thinking of the church’s interests. I had recognized that Liu Hua and Meng Ran were evil people, that they had obstructed and damaged the church’s work, and that the brothers and sisters had suffered unspeakably due to their suppression, but I chose to avoid and ignore the situation in order to protect my own interests. I wasn’t protecting the church’s work. It is God’s intention that all antichrists, evil people, and disbelievers are cleared out of the church, so that the brothers and sisters can live a normal church life, pursue the truth, and do their duties. Yet, I was timid and overcautious, and didn’t dare take a stand and expose those evil people, even after I saw them suppressing others and disrupting the church’s work, just so I could protect my own interests. Wasn’t I standing on the side of Satan and condoning these evil people as they tyrannized the church? Wasn’t I acting as their accomplice? I nominally believed in and followed God, but in reality, I was protecting Satan and standing on the side of evil people. At a crucial moment, I turned my back on the church and had only protected myself, instead of considering the church’s interests. I

realized that I had been so deceitful and selfish. God's kingdom wants those who are honest and have a sense of justice. Deceitful, selfish people who only protect their own interests are of Satan and God will not save them.

After that, I came across the following passage of God's words: **"Antichrists have extremely vicious dispositions. If you try to prune them or expose them, they will hate you and sink their teeth into you as if they were venomous snakes. You won't be able to swing or shake them off no matter how hard you try. When you encounter such antichrists, do you feel afraid? Some people do get scared and say, 'I don't dare prune them. They are so fierce, like venomous snakes, and if they wrap their coils around me, I'm finished.' What kind of people are these? They are too small of stature, they aren't good for anything, they aren't Christ's good soldiers, and they cannot bear witness to God. So, what should you do when you encounter such antichrists? If they threaten you or try to take your life, would you be afraid? In such situations, you must quickly unite with your brothers and sisters and stand up, investigate, gather evidence, and expose the antichrist until they are cleared out of the church. This is thoroughly resolving the problem. ... God's chosen people should always bear God's commission in mind. Cleansing evil people and antichrists away is the most crucial fight in the battle against Satan. If this fight is won, it will become an overcomer's testimony. Battling against Satans and devils is an experiential testimony that God's chosen people should have. It's a truth reality that overcomers must possess. God has bestowed so much truth upon people, has led you for such a long time, and has provided so much for you, for the purpose of you bearing witness and safeguarding the work of the church. It turns out, when evil people and antichrists do evil deeds and disturb the work of the church, you**

become timid and withdraw, fleeing with your arms over your head—you are a good-for-nothing. You cannot overcome Satans, you have not borne witness, and God detests you. In this critical moment, you must stand up and wage war against Satans, expose the evil deeds of antichrists, condemn and curse them, giving them no place to hide and cleansing them away from the church. Only this can be counted as gaining victory over Satans and ending their fate. You are one of God's chosen people, a follower of God. You cannot be afraid of challenges; you must act according to the truth principles. This is what it means to be an overcomer. If you are afraid of challenges and make compromises because you fear retaliation from evil people or antichrists, then you are not a follower of God, and you are not one of God's chosen people. You are a good-for-nothing, inferior even to service-doers" (The Word, Vol.

4. Exposing Antichrists. Item Nine (Part Eight)). God's words instilled me with faith and strength. I had to stop being afraid of Satan's forces of darkness, I had to stop protecting myself and being useless. I needed to make a stand to expose the evil people in the church and protect the church's interests—that was my duty and responsibility. God's words also showed me a path of practice: The powers of one person alone are limited, but I could band together with other brothers and sisters who had a sense of justice to report and expose those evil people, and thereby protect our church life, stop the brothers and sisters from being disrupted by Satan's forces, and make sure that the evil people were addressed in a proper manner. Even if I was suppressed and punished, I wouldn't give in to Satan's forces. After that, I stopped being constrained by Satan's dark influence, and I no longer considered my own prospects and destiny. I joined together with other brothers and sisters and reported Meng Ran's issues to another leader. After looking into the situation, the leader dismissed Meng Ran. I was ecstatic

when I saw Meng Ran finally being dismissed and filled with gratitude toward God. After that, we helped the leader take stock of all of Liu Hua's and Meng Ran's evildoing. They both were subsequently classified as evil people and expelled, while Xia Yu was dismissed for being a false leader because she had failed to do real work and tolerated evil people running amok doing bad things in the church. Free from the disruption of those evil people, peaceful tranquility returned to our church life, and the brothers and sisters were able to go about their duties normally. Soon after that, every project in the church started to yield results.

Through this experience, I came to see that all things are subject to God's sovereignty and arrangements, and I also witnessed God's righteousness. Satan's evil forces cannot gain solid footing in God's house—those that ought to be exposed are all eventually exposed and eliminated. Looking back on how Meng Ran obstructed us when we reported and exposed Liu Hua, and how Xia Yu attempted to block us from reporting Meng Ran—I hadn't understood why God would allow that to happen at the time, but now I see that through Liu Hua, God exposed an evil person and a false leader who were more deeply concealed, one after the other. Through this, I gained discernment and learned valuable lessons. God is truly wise! Though the process of reporting them was full of twists and turns, God's words guided me every step of the way, and instilled me with knowledge of God's wisdom and almightiness. I saw that the truth and righteousness truly reign in God's house. This gave me even deeper faith in God and helped me gain an understanding of my selfish, deceitful nature. I never could have learned any of this in a comfortable environment. Thanks be to God!

39. 75 Days Detained

By Zhao Liang, China

One day in September 2009, two sisters and I went to preach the gospel to a religious leader. The leader, however, rejected it and summoned over ten members of his church, who beat us and took us to the local police station. I was quite frightened at the time and worried that the police would torment us. I knew that the CCP hated and resisted God above all else and could kill believers they caught with impunity. Many brothers and sisters had been tortured after arrest, and some had even been beaten to death or crippled. I was concerned that because of my small stature, I wouldn't be able to withstand the policemen's torture, so I pretended I was mute. When they asked me where I was from, who my church leader was and who had sent me there to preach the gospel, I didn't say a word. They then made me hold a squat, but after squatting for a while my legs couldn't take it anymore and I fell to the ground. Two policemen kicked and stomped on me randomly and ordered me to get up and resume squatting. After squatting for a little while longer, my legs became sore and painful and my whole body broke out in sweat. One policeman mockingly said, "How's that feel? Pretty good eh? If you don't start talking, we'll make you keep squatting." The other policeman crassly exclaimed, "You're a stubborn one, aren't you? I guess we'll have to do this the hard way. I know I can pry open that mouth of yours!" After saying that, he wedged beer bottles behind my knees and said, "If these bottles fall, you're in for a beating." After a while, I just couldn't hold the squat and the beer bottles fell clanging to the floor. They kicked me to the floor and began viciously kicking and stomping on me. My legs, back, shoulders and waist were in unbearable pain, and I curled up in a ball, wracked with agony in my heart. Given that

China's constitution explicitly guarantees religious freedom, we are within our legal rights to believe in God and preach the gospel, but the CCP still continually persecutes and torments us. They are truly evil! Just then, I recalled how the Lord Jesus' disciples had been persecuted: Stephen was stoned to death alive for upholding the Lord's way, and Peter was imprisoned for preaching the gospel and testifying to God and was ultimately crucified upside down. I thought of how God said: **"Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven"** (Matthew 5:10). These stories were very heartening to me—saints of every age had experienced enormous persecution for preaching the Lord's gospel and had even been martyred for God. They had borne great and resounding testimony, but I had become weak and was in agony after suffering just a little persecution and torment. What I had gone through was nowhere near what the saints of previous ages had experienced. There was value and meaning to my being persecuted and tormented for preaching God's kingdom gospel. After realizing this, I no longer felt pained and gained renewed faith. I quietly prayed to God, asking Him to give me the will to bear suffering, not give in to Satan and stand firm in my witness to glorify God.

When the police saw that I was still unwilling to speak, they forbade me from sleeping. The two policemen took turns monitoring me and as soon as they saw me close my eyes, they would kick me. At around one in the morning, two other officers who had just started their shift took me to the main hall of the police station and made me sit on the ground. One of the officers viciously yelled, "I hear you're being really stubborn and won't tell us anything about your belief in God. I guess I'll have to teach you a little lesson to get you to speak!" With that, he viciously kicked me to the ground and pressed down hard on my head with his foot. It was very painful

when his foot dug into my head and I felt like he was going to grind my head to smithereens. The other officer pressed down on my chest with his foot and I immediately felt short of breath and was in unbearable pain. After that, he stomped down hard on my thighs and calves. I was in utter agony within and thought, “Even though I’m not a person of great importance or high status in this world, I’ve never felt the humiliation of being stepped on before.” I continually prayed to God, asking Him to give me strength so that I could withstand this suffering and stand firm in my witness. After praying, I recalled how the Lord Jesus had been crucified: He wore a crown of thorns, was humiliated and taunted by Roman soldiers, whipped until His body was just a lattice of wounds and was ultimately savagely nailed to the cross. I thought of God’s words which say: **“On the road to Jerusalem, Jesus was in agony, as if a knife were being twisted in His heart, yet He had not the slightest intention of going back on His word; always there was a powerful force compelling Him onward to where He would be crucified. Ultimately, He was nailed to the cross and became the likeness of sinful flesh, completing the work of the redemption of mankind. He broke free of the shackles of death and Hades. Before Him, mortality, hell, and Hades lost their power, and were vanquished by Him. He lived for thirty-three years, throughout which He always did His utmost to satisfy God’s intentions according to God’s work at the time, never considering His own personal gain or loss, and always thinking of the intentions of God the Father”** (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. How to Serve in Harmony With God’s Intentions). I thought about how the Lord Jesus is the Lord of creation and the King of the universe, but despite having such grand and honorable status, He was willing to undergo such suffering and humiliation to redeem mankind. So, what was a little suffering and humiliation to a filthy and corrupt human

like me with no more value than a mere ant? It was a blessing to have the opportunity to bear this suffering and bear witness for God, so I should be happy. Having realized this, I felt renewed motivation and had the will to bear suffering. After that, they switched to another form of torture. A policeman lit a cigarette and stuck it in my nose and then balanced a drinking glass on my head, saying, “If the cigarette or the glass falls to the floor, you’re in for it.” When the cigarette had almost burned down to my nose, I exhaled through my nostrils to expel the cigarette. As soon as the officer saw the cigarette fall to the ground, he kicked and stomped me, and then grabbed four or five handfuls of unhusked rice, placed them on my neck, and lifted my collar to let the unhusked rice fall inside. I immediately felt a prickly itching throughout my body that was difficult to bear. At around five in the morning, two officials arrived. When they were informed that I hadn’t divulged any information, one of them took a belt out from their bag and began viciously whipping me on the back of my hands, shins and knees with the buckle-end of the belt. The whipping left me in searing pain. After I still wouldn’t talk after being whipped more than twenty times, they gave up and left.

In the afternoon of the second day, I was sent to the county detention house. A detention house officer told the inmates, “This one’s a believer that’s been caught proselytizing and won’t tell us anything. Take good, good care of him!” The inmates surrounded me and eyed me menacingly. They were all stripped to the waist and some even had tattoos, which made me feel a little intimidated. I’d already been tortured by the officers at the police station and my body was covered with injuries. Now I was up against a whole gang of evil and vicious-looking inmates—if they continued to torture me, would my body be able to withstand the abuse? If I couldn’t take the torment and betrayed God like Judas, then was cursed and

punished, wouldn't my belief in God be a total failure? It would be better to crack my head on the wall and end my life than betray God. Just then, I recalled a passage of God's words: **"The suffering of some people reaches an extreme, and their thoughts turn to death. This is not true love for God; such people are cowards, they have no perseverance, they are weak and powerless! God is eager for man to love Him, but the more man loves Him, the greater man's suffering, and the more man loves Him, the greater man's trials. ... Thus, during these last days you must bear testimony to God. No matter how great your suffering, you should walk until the very end, and even at your last breath, still you must be faithful to God and at the mercy of God; only this is truly loving God, and only this is the strong and resounding testimony"** (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. Only by Experiencing Painful Trials Can You Know the Loveliness of God). God's words helped me realize that those who wish to die when faced with some great suffering and hardship are cowards, the laughing stock of Satan and cannot satisfy God's intention. Before I'd been arrested, I was more vocal than anyone about loving God, satisfying God and bearing witness for Him. But when I was tortured and began to suffer, I became negative and weak and wanted to use death to escape from it all—where was my stature? Realizing this, I felt incredibly embarrassed and guilty. I quietly prayed to God, "Oh God, no matter how they torment me, I will always rely on You and stand firm in my witness."

Under orders from the police, the head inmate demanded to know my name and address. He viciously snarled, "You're a believer and a political prisoner, so your crimes are even more serious than a murderer's. If you don't talk, just wait and see what I'll do to you!" But I still didn't say a word. Seeing that I had no intention of speaking, he got up and twisted my arms while two other inmates pressed down on my ankles. Then, another

four or five inmates took turns punching me in the calves and thighs. Each punch was unbearably painful and I felt that I wouldn't be able to take it much longer. I thought to myself, "Will I be tormented to death by these inmates?" I continually called out to God for protection and to give me the strength to withstand the ravaging of these demons. After praying, I thought of how the Lord Jesus said: **"And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear Him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell"** (Matthew 10:28). Truly, these demons were indeed vicious, but they could only ravage and torment my body, they couldn't kill my soul. What's more, the death of the body is not a true death. Being persecuted and killed by the CCP for bearing witness to God meant I was being persecuted because of righteousness, and God commended such acts. I recalled a hymn: **"With God's exhortations in my heart, I will never bend the knee to Satan. Though our heads may roll and our blood may spill, the backbones of God's people cannot be bent. I will bear resounding testimony for God, and humiliate devils and Satan. Pain and hardships are predestined by God, and I will be loyal and submit to Him unto death. Never again will I cause God to weep or worry. I will offer up my love and loyalty to God and complete my mission to glorify Him"** (Follow the Lamb and Sing New Songs, I Wish to See the Day of God's Glory). As I pondered the lyrics of the hymn, the will to withstand all suffering and stand firm in my witness for God grew inside of me. After their beating, my legs were covered in black and green bruises and badly swollen. The slightest touch intensified the pain. Due to the serious injuries the muscles in my legs had sustained, I was unable to squat, so I had to sit on the edge of the squat toilet when I went to the bathroom. Their brutal beatings became a regular occurrence. One of the inmates who had trained as a boxer used me as a punching bag to practice his punches and palm

strikes and would often chop at my neck with his hands. Each time he wound up and chopped me on the neck, I became lightheaded. There was also a particularly vicious-looking inmate who pinned me down on the bed, grabbed my neck fiercely with his two hands and nearly strangled me to death when he saw I wouldn't give up any information about my belief in God no matter how I was tortured. On several occasions, the head inmate and his lackeys would wrap match head fuel in cotton balls and then wedge the balls between my fingers and toes and light them on fire. It burned my fingers and toes and left them in searing pain. The head inmate would then intentionally step on my burnt toes until blood oozed from the wounds. Each time the inmates tormented and ravaged me, I would call out and pray to God, asking Him for strength. Only through God's guidance was I able to withstand the repeated torment of the demons.

One day in late November, I underwent a fourth retrial by the prosecutor's office, but I still refused to speak. An officer told the head inmate, "He won't tell us anything and the prosecutor's office is getting fed up. You've got to get something out of him, no matter what it takes." After that, the head inmate ordered four or five other inmates to strip me naked, then he lit a plastic bowl on fire and let the hot melted plastic drip on my skin. Each drip made me writhe in pain—it was so excruciating that I couldn't bear it. I violently struggled against them, but they held me down, so I couldn't move. I called out to God repeatedly in my heart, saying, "Oh God, I can't take it anymore. Please protect me. Give me strength, and the will to bear this suffering, so that I don't give in to Satan and can stand firm in my testimony for You until death." Once again, I thought of how the Lord Jesus had been nailed alive to the cross by Roman soldiers, of how His blood slowly dripped dry. Despite His greatness and honorableness, God who is on high became incarnate and endured unbearable suffering on earth

to save mankind. God was innocent and did not deserve such suffering, but He quietly endured it all to save man. Given that I was just a corrupt human, enduring this little bit of suffering was no big deal at all. In China, where God is seen as the enemy, it's hard to avoid suffering from persecution if one wants to follow God and attain the truth and life. But it is worthwhile and meaningful to suffer, because it is done in order to gain truth and be saved. This savage torment allowed me to clearly see the truth-hating, God-loathing, wicked essence of the CCP. They resist God, cruelly afflict people and are nothing more than evil spirits and demons. Realizing all this, I came to hate the great red dragon even more—the more they persecuted me, the more I would rely on God to stand firm in my testimony and humiliate them! I fought through the pain, and somehow made it through this ordeal. That night, while the inmates were sleeping, I took stock of my injuries: My thighs and calves were heavily bruised. My chest was burnt, and the skin on it was bloody and mangled. My whole body was covered in burn wounds. I thought to myself, “They’ve already reduced me to this state. Will I be able to take it if they torture me like this again tomorrow?” I shuddered to think of what excruciating pain awaited me and felt like my head would burst. I felt like the situation had already exceeded the limit of what my body could take and I was on the verge of a breakdown. I hurriedly prayed to God, “Oh God, my heart is full of fear and I don’t think I can take much more of this. Please give me the strength to stand firm.” After praying, I recalled God’s words which say: **“Faith is like a single log bridge: Those who cling abjectly to life will have difficulty in crossing it, but those who are ready to sacrifice themselves can pass over, sure of foot and worry-free. If man harbors timid and fearful thoughts, it is because Satan has fooled them, afraid that we will cross the bridge of faith to enter into God”** (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work

of God. Utterances of Christ in the Beginning, Chapter 6). God's words showed me a path forward—only by relying on faith and putting my life on the line could I get through this sure of foot and without worry. Wasn't I just falling for Satan's plot by living in cowardice and fear? I prayed to God, no longer willing to live in fear and be made a fool of by Satan. I was ready to place myself completely in His hands, and would stand firm in my witness and humiliate Satan even if it meant I was beaten to death. I felt a sense of relief, and had the faith to face whatever came my way next. Just then, I recalled a hymn called "Rising Up Amidst Darkness and Oppression": "Brutal arrests and persecution reveal the face of Satan. Through these hardships and trials, God's words feel ever more precious. God has appeared in the flesh—how could I not follow Him? I despise Satan, and follow God with an iron will. Wherever the king of devils is in power, arduous is the path of believing in God. Satan snaps at my heels; there is no safe place to reside. Believing in and worshiping God is absolutely the right thing to do. Having chosen to love God, I will be loyal till the end. The tricks of the king of devils are savage, vicious, and truly contemptible. Having gained a clear view of the devils' visage, I love Christ even more. I will never give in to Satan or drag out an ignoble existence. I will suffer all torment, hardship, and pain, and endure through the darkest of nights. To bring God comfort, I will bear victorious witness and shame Satan" (Follow the Lamb and Sing New Songs). This hymn spoke to me deeply, and the more I sang it, the more encouraged I felt. Only after being savagely persecuted by the CCP did I clearly see their God-resisting, cruel, demonic essence. As God's believers, we walk the right path of life, preaching the gospel, bearing witness for God and allowing others to receive God's salvation. This is a just act, yet the CCP frantically arrests and persecutes believers, torturing those they catch until they are on the brink of death in order to make them betray God, and to

accomplish the CCP's goal of wielding power and having control over people forever. The CCP is nothing more than a gang of demons who hate God and the truth! Once I saw the CCP for how repulsive and evil it truly is, I hated it with all my heart, abandoned it and resolved to never give in to it!

The very next day, when the head inmate saw how mangled the flesh on my chest had become from all the burns, he became a bit worried and said to the other inmates, "We can't torture him anymore. If we kill him, the blame will be put on us and our sentences will be extended." When I heard this, I felt that God had opened up a way out for me and I quietly gave thanks to Him. Ultimately, the police couldn't find any evidence to indict me, but insisted on charging me with "disturbing social order," for which I was sentenced to 75 days in jail.

I endured terrible suffering and persecution at the hands of the CCP, but God's words enlightened and guided me every step of the way, filling me with faith and strength and ensuring that I could stand firm throughout these tribulations. Without God's protection and the guidance of His words, I could have been tortured to death by them at any time. At the same time, I came to see how God governs and reigns sovereign over all things. No matter how savage and uninhibited Satan is, it is just God's defeated opponent. Just as Almighty God's words say: **"Regardless of how 'powerful' Satan is, regardless of how audacious and ambitious it is, regardless of how great is its ability to inflict damage, regardless of how wide-ranging are the techniques with which it corrupts and lures man, regardless of how clever are the tricks and schemes with which it intimidates man, regardless of how changeable is the form in which it exists, it has never been able to create a single living thing, has never been able to set down laws or rules for the existence of all things, and**

has never been able to rule and control any object, whether animate or inanimate. Within the cosmos and the firmament, there is not a single person or object that was born from it, or exists because of it; there is not a single person or object that is ruled by it, or controlled by it. On the contrary, it not only has to live under the dominion of God, but, moreover, must submit to all of God's orders and commands. Without God's permission, it is difficult for Satan to touch even a drop of water or grain of sand upon the land; without God's permission, Satan is not even free to move the ants about upon the land, let alone mankind, who was created by God. In the eyes of God, Satan is inferior to the lilies on the mountain, to the birds flying in the air, to the fish in the sea, and to the maggots on the earth. Its role among all things is to serve all things, to serve mankind, and to serve God's work and His plan of management. Regardless of how malicious its nature, and how evil its essence, the only thing it can do is to dutifully abide by its function: being of service to God, and providing a counterpoint to God. Such is the substance and position of Satan. Its essence is unconnected to life, unconnected to power, unconnected to authority; it is merely a plaything in God's hands, just a machine in service to God!" (The Word,

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40. Why I Blindly Put My Faith in Other People

By Chen Si, China

In 2021, I was responsible for the watering work of three churches. Two watering group leaders in one church, Li Can and Zhang Xuan, used to work with me. At that time, I felt that Li Can was capable and burdened in her duty. She would point out and help me correct any deviations in my duty in a timely manner. With her supervision and reminders, some work was not delayed. Zhang Xuan was also burdened and would help me with a loving heart when I was in a poor state. I was quite happy to work with them, thinking that their working abilities, calibers, and attitudes toward their duties were quite good. With the two of them here taking charge, I didn't have to worry much about the watering work of this church and could focus on the work of the other two churches. Later, from their letters, I saw that their work results were better than those of other churches. I further confirmed their working abilities, so I rarely got involved in their work.

Once, my leader sent a letter asking me to participate practically in the watering work and to immediately adjust any unsuitable personnel that I discovered, to avoid delays to the work. Upon receiving the letter, I quickly went to the other two churches to see how the work was going. I found a watering group leader who couldn't do real work and promptly made adjustments. When I was about to visit the church which Li Can was in charge of, I thought, "Whether in terms of their working abilities, sense of burden, or caliber, she and Zhang Xuan are fine in all regards. With the two of them there, there definitely won't be any problems with the work." Therefore, I did not check their work. Another time, I gathered the watering group leaders from several churches because I wanted to learn in detail

about the deviations in their work, so as to discover problems and solve them in a timely manner. However, at that time, I mainly inquired about the work of the other group leaders, asking them how they usually held gatherings for new believers and what words of God they used to fellowship and solve new believers' questions, and so on. Through detailed questioning, I found some problems and fellowshiped about them, and they reversed them then and there. When it came to Li Can and Zhang Xuan, I thought their sense of burden and working abilities in performing their duties were fine, so I didn't inquire in detail about their work. Later, my leader asked me to provide a relatively good waterer, so I recommended Li Can. However, after looking into the situation, the leader found that Li Can's watering results were not good and asked me how I could have provided a person like her. I thought, "Could it be that the leader's requirements are too high? According to my understanding of Li Can, even if she can't be promoted, she is still more than capable of watering new believers in the church." Later, the leader told me, "Li Can and Zhang Xuan are lazy, slippery, and seek comfort when doing their duties. We have already fellowshiped about this with them; let's see how they perform in the future." Hearing this, I not only didn't take it seriously but also thought, "Who doesn't have moments of considering their flesh? As long as they do their current work well, isn't that good enough?" After that, I still didn't follow up or supervise their work.

After a while, the leader sent a letter saying that there were many problems with the watering work in the church Li Can was in charge of and asked me to resolve them as soon as possible. When I saw the letter, I thought, "Li Can has believed in God for many years and has served as a leader. I know her working ability and caliber. Could the situation really be that bad? Has the leader made a mistake? But since the leader said so, there

must have been a reason. I need to look into the situation practically.” It was only through learning about the situation that I found that neither Li Can nor Zhang Xuan was doing real work. They had not cultivated talented individuals in the church that should have been cultivated, and what new believers ate and drank at gatherings was not the most basic truths regarding knowing God’s work. There were also some new believers who had become negative after listening to the CCP’s rumors, and Li Can and Zhang Xuan had surprisingly arranged an irresponsible person to support them. The problems of new believers had not been solved, and Li Can and Zhang Xuan hadn’t found ways to fellowship with the new believers and help them further. Some new believers had almost pulled away. In the end, the new believers had only reversed their states by reading God’s words themselves. Though there were many deviations and loopholes in the watering work, Li Can and Zhang Xuan did not reflect on themselves, and they even tried to blame others. Learning about these things, I was shocked, “How did things turn out like this? According to my understanding of them, they bore a burden in doing their duties before. How did things turn out this way now?” But the facts were laid out right in front of my eyes; I had to accept this. At the same time, I felt very guilty. If I had supervised and looked into their work earlier, so many problems wouldn’t have arisen in the watering work. I had an unshirkable responsibility for this.

Later, I saw a passage from God’s words. Almighty God says: **“False leaders never inquire about supervisors who are not doing actual work, or who are not tending to their proper work. They think they just need to choose a supervisor and that’s the end of the matter, and that afterward the supervisor can handle all work matters themselves. So false leaders just hold gatherings every so often, and do not supervise the work or ask how it’s going, and act like hands-off bosses. If**

someone reports a problem with a supervisor, a false leader will say, 'It's just a minor problem, it's fine. You can handle it yourselves. Don't ask me.' The person who reported the issue says, 'That supervisor is a lazy glutton. They only focus on food and entertainment, and they are bone idle. They don't want to suffer even a little bit of hardship in their duty, and they always slack off deceitfully and make up excuses to avoid their work and shirk their responsibilities. They aren't suited to be a supervisor.' The false leader will answer, 'They were great when they were selected as supervisor. What you're saying isn't true, or even if it is, it's just a temporary manifestation.' The false leader won't try and find out more about the supervisor's situation, instead they will judge and pass a verdict on the matter based on their past impressions of that supervisor. Regardless of who reports problems with the supervisor, the false leader will ignore them. The supervisor isn't doing actual work, and the work of the church has nearly come to a standstill, but the false leader doesn't care, it's like they're not even involved. It's nauseating enough that when someone reports the supervisor's issues, they turn a blind eye. But what is most detestable of all? When people report really serious issues with the supervisor to them, they won't try and sort these out, and they'll even come out with all sorts of excuses: 'I know this supervisor, they truly believe in God, they would never have any problems. Even if they did have a small issue, God would protect them and discipline them. If they make any mistakes, that is between them and God—we need not concern ourselves with it.' False leaders work according to their own notions and imaginings in this way. They pretend to understand the truth and have faith, but they just make a mess of church work—the church work may even come to a standstill and they'll still feign ignorance of this. Aren't false leaders acting too

much like paper pushers? They are incapable of doing real work themselves, and they aren't meticulous regarding the work of team leaders and supervisors either—they do not follow up on it or inquire about it. Their view of people is only based on their own impressions and imaginings. When they see someone performing well for a time, they think that this person will be good forever, that they will not change; they do not believe anyone who says there is a problem with this person, and they ignore it when someone warns them about that person. Do you think false leaders are stupid? They are stupid and foolish. ... false leaders have a fatal flaw: They are quick to trust people based on their own imaginings. And this is caused by not understanding the truth, is it not? How does God's word reveal the essence of corrupt humankind? Why should they trust in people when God doesn't? False leaders are too arrogant and self-righteous, are they not? What they think is, 'I couldn't have misjudged this person, there shouldn't be any problems with this person that I've judged to be suitable; they are definitely not someone who indulges in eating, drinking and entertainment, or who likes comfort and hates hard work. They are absolutely dependable and trustworthy. They will not change; if they did, that would mean I was wrong about them, wouldn't it?' What kind of logic is this? Are they some kind of expert? Do they have x-ray vision? Do they have that special skill? You could live with a person for one or two years, but would you be able to see who they really are without a suitable environment to lay their nature essence utterly bare? If they were not revealed by God, you could live side-by-side with them for three, or even five, years, and would still struggle to see just what kind of nature essence they have. And how much more is that true when you rarely see them, are rarely with them? False leaders

blithely trust a person based on a fleeting impression or someone else's positive appraisal of them, and dare to entrust the work of the church to such a person. In this, are they not being extremely blind? Are they not acting recklessly? And when they work like this, are the false leaders not being extremely irresponsible?" (The Word, Vol. 5. The

Responsibilities of Leaders and Workers. The Responsibilities of Leaders and Workers (3)). God was exposing my state precisely; I was so irresponsible toward my duty. I had worked with Li Can and Zhang Xuan before, and because they had some working abilities, and got some results in doing their duties, I had easily put my faith in them. After completely handing the work over to them, I hadn't even supervised or asked about it. When the leader asked me to check whether the watering group leaders were doing real work, I hadn't checked their work because I had faith in them. Even when I gathered with them, I hadn't inquired about their work in detail. Later, when the leader said that they were craving comfort in their duties and not doing real work, I had felt a bit resistant in my heart, thinking that they were not like that, and that the leader didn't know them well. I had even argued on their behalf in my heart. Reflecting on it, I had only interacted with them for a few months. On the surface, they appeared to have some working abilities and to have some sense of burden in doing their duties, but I didn't understand their humanity and nature essence at all. I had put my faith in them based on temporary impressions and good feelings, and then felt at ease handing the work over to them without supervision. God exposed that people have been deeply corrupted by Satan, so all of their corrupt dispositions haven't been resolved, all of them can be perfunctory, irresponsible, and go their own way before they are made perfect. I hadn't been viewing things based on God's words, instead I had relied on my notions and imaginings, and solidified their good side in my mind based on their temporary good

performances. Even when the leader pointed out their problems, I had not been convinced, thinking the leader's requirements for them were too high. Living by Satan's disposition, I especially trusted myself and held to my own viewpoint to see things, thinking what I saw as good was indisputable, not accepting whatever others explained, which ended up delaying the work. I was really too arrogant and conceited!

Later, I saw another passage of God's words: **"Although, today, many people do a duty, there are only a few who pursue the truth. Very few people pursue the truth and enter reality as they do their duty; for most, there are still no principles to the way they do things, they are still not people who truly submit to God; they merely claim that they love the truth, and are willing to pursue the truth, and are willing to strive for the truth, yet it is still unknown how long their resolve will last. People who do not pursue the truth are liable to reveal their corrupt dispositions at any time or place. They are devoid of any sense of responsibility toward their duty, they are often perfunctory, they act as they wish, and are even incapable of accepting pruning. As soon as they become negative and weak, they are liable to abandon their duty—this happens often, nothing is more common; such is the way all who do not pursue the truth behave. And so, when people have yet to gain the truth, they are unreliable and untrustworthy. What does it mean that they are untrustworthy? It means that when they encounter difficulties or setbacks, they are likely to fall down, and to become negative and weak. Is someone who is often negative and weak someone who is trustworthy? Definitely not. But people who understand the truth are different. People who truly understand the truth are bound to have a God-fearing heart, and a heart of submission to God, and only people with a God-fearing heart are trustworthy people; people**

without a God-fearing heart are not trustworthy. How should people without a God-fearing heart be approached? They should, of course, be given loving assistance and support. They should be followed up on more as they do their duty, and given more help and instruction; only then can they be guaranteed to do their duty effectively. And what is the aim of doing this? The chief aim is to uphold the work of God's house. Secondary to this is in order to promptly identify problems, to promptly provide to them, support them, or prune them, setting right their deviations, and making up for their shortcomings and deficiencies. This is beneficial to people; there is nothing malicious about it. Supervising people, observing them, trying to understand them—this is all in order to help them enter the right track of faith in God, to enable them to do their duty as God asks and according to principle, to stop them from causing any disturbances or disruptions, and to stop them from doing futile work. The aim of doing this is entirely about showing responsibility toward them and toward the work of God's house; there is no malice to it” (The Word, Vol. 5. The Responsibilities of Leaders and Workers. The Responsibilities of Leaders and Workers (7)). From God's words, I understood that although we did our duties in the church and were willing to do them well, this was only a good intention. Because we all had corrupt dispositions, we couldn't absolutely submit to God and lacked principles in our actions. This led to deviations in our work, and we were often perfunctory and irresponsible. Therefore, it was necessary for leaders and workers to supervise the work to promptly discover and fix problems. Li Can and Zhang Xuan were also corrupt people. Although they were burdensome in doing their duties before, it didn't mean they would always be like that. Additionally, their good calibers and working abilities didn't mean they had gained the truth principles in handling matters, and

were completely reliable. This required supervision and follow-up on their work. I couldn't see through the corrupt essence of people and viewed people and things based on my own notions and imaginings, easily believing in them and handing over the work without supervision. I was truly foolish. If I hadn't blindly believed in them and had regularly supervised and checked their work according to the requirements of God's house, fulfilling my own responsibilities, the watering work would not have been so ineffective for several months. The more I thought about it, the more I blamed myself.

I pondered on it more: Why did I trust Li Can and Zhang Xuan so much without supervising or checking on their duties? Even when the leader reminded me, I didn't take it to heart. What corrupt disposition was controlling me behind this? In my reflection, I saw a passage of God's words: **"If, in your heart, you truly understand the truth, then you will know how to practice the truth and submit to God, and will naturally embark on the path of pursuing the truth. If the path you walk is the right one, and in line with God's intentions, then the work of the Holy Spirit will not leave you—in which case there will be less and less chance of you betraying God. Without the truth, it is easy to do evil, and you will do it despite yourself. For example, if you have an arrogant and conceited disposition, then being told not to oppose God makes no difference, you can't help yourself, it is beyond your control. You would not do it on purpose; you would do it under the domination of your arrogant and conceited nature. Your arrogance and conceit would make you look down on God and see Him as being of no account; they would cause you to exalt yourself, constantly put yourself on display; they would make you scorn others, they would leave no one in your heart but yourself; they would rob you of God's place in your**

heart, and ultimately cause you to sit in the place of God and demand that people submit to you, and make you venerate your own thoughts, ideas, and notions as the truth. So much evil is done by people under the dominance of their arrogant and conceited nature!” (The Word, Vol. 3.

The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. Only by Pursuing the Truth Can One Achieve a Change in Disposition). Reflecting on God’s words, I found the cause of my failure: It mainly came from my arrogant disposition and over-reliance on myself. I believed that they were serious and responsible in doing their duties, being burdensome, and wouldn’t be perfunctory. So, I trusted myself completely, always thinking “in my opinion,” “I believe,” “I feel,” and thought my evaluation of people was accurate and couldn’t be wrong. After handing over the work to them, I didn’t even bother to supervise or inquire about them. Even when the leader explicitly pointed out their problems, I didn’t take it seriously, thinking they were just revealing some corruption, not a big deal. My failure was due to my overconfidence in myself. I used my own viewpoints as the standards for measuring people. No matter what others said, I wouldn’t accept it. I believed my evaluation of people was accurate, I knew them well, and was qualified to evaluate them. I disagreed with and rejected any views others held that were different from mine. I never considered whether my thoughts and views might be wrong, biased, or could do harm to the work. I was truly arrogant and unreasonable! Relying on my arrogant disposition to do my duties, I didn’t take others’ suggestions seriously, much less seek the truth principles. I was really arrogant and dismissive of others, with no place for God in my heart. I thought that the people I trusted and the things I decided were certainly right according to my own notions and imaginings, stubbornly clinging to my own viewpoints and neglecting my duties, leading to significant losses to the work. This way, was I performing my duty at all? I was opposing

God, doing evil. Realizing the severity of the nature and consequence, I quickly came before God to pray and repent.

Later, I saw a passage of God's words that gave me a path to practice. Almighty God says: **"No matter what you're doing, you must learn how to seek and submit to the truth; no matter who is offering you advice, if it accords with the truth principles, then even if it comes from a small child, you must accept it and submit to it. No matter what problems a person has, if their words and advice completely accord with the truth principles, then you should accept them and submit to them. The results of acting in this way will be good and in accordance with God's intentions. The key is to look at your motives, and the principles and methods by which you handle things. If your principles and methods for handling things stem from human will, from human thoughts and notions, or from satanic philosophies, then those principles and methods are impractical, and they are bound to be ineffective. This is because the source of your principles and methods is incorrect and does not accord with the truth principles. If your views are based upon the truth principles, and you handle things according to the truth principles, then you will undoubtedly handle them in the correct way. Even if some people do not accept the way that you handle things at the time, or they have notions about it, or they are resistant toward it, after some time, it will be validated. Things that are in accordance with the truth principles yield increasingly positive results, while things that are not in accordance with the truth principles lead to increasingly negative consequences, even if they fit with people's notions at the time. People will all receive confirmation of this"** (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. The Path of Resolving a Corrupt Disposition). God's words made me understand that when encountering some situations, we needed to deny

ourselves first, seek the truth, and view matters based on God's words. We should examine whether our viewpoints and perspectives aligned with God's intentions and if there were God's words and the truth principles as their bases. We need to have a seeking heart when receiving reminders and suggestions from brothers and sisters, not holding onto our own viewpoints. We should deal with them according to the principles. Such an attitude means seeking, submission, and rationality before God. Reflecting on my previous approach, I didn't see things based on the truth principles but held onto my own viewpoints, thinking I knew better than others. When brothers and sisters offered suggestions, I didn't have a seeking heart and trusted myself excessively. This was the main reason for my failure. To move on, I needed to first learn to deny myself and listen more to the suggestions of brothers and sisters.

Later, I saw another passage of God's words saying: **“Judging from the literal meaning, supervision means inspection: checking which churches have implemented the work arrangements and which have not, the progress of implementation, which leaders and workers are doing real work and which are not, and whether any leaders or workers are merely dispensing the work arrangements without participating in the specific tasks. Supervision is a specific task. Besides supervising the implementation of work arrangements—whether they have been implemented, the speed of implementation, the quality of implementation, and the results achieved—higher-level leaders and workers must check if the leaders and workers are strictly following the work arrangements. Some leaders and workers outwardly say they are willing to follow the work arrangements, but after being faced with a certain environment, they fear being arrested and just focus on hiding, having long since relegated the work arrangements to the back**

of their minds; the brothers' and sisters' problems go unresolved, and they don't know what the work arrangements specify or what the principles of practice are. This shows that the work arrangements have not been implemented at all. Other leaders and workers have opinions, notions, and resistance to some of the requirements in the work arrangements. When it comes time to implement them, they deviate from the true meaning of the work arrangements, doing things according to their own ideas, going through the motions and glossing over things just to be done with them, or taking their own path, doing things however they feel like. All such situations require supervision by higher-level leaders and workers. The purpose of supervision is to better implement the specific tasks required by the work arrangements without deviation and according to principles. While conducting supervision, higher-level leaders and workers must place great emphasis on identifying if there is anyone who is not doing real work or is irresponsible and slow in implementing the work arrangements; if anyone shows a resistant mood concerning the work arrangements and is unwilling to implement them or implements them selectively, or simply does not follow the work arrangements at all and instead just carries out their own enterprise; if anyone is withholding the work arrangements, and only communicates them according to their own ideas, not letting God's chosen people know the true meaning and specific requirements of the work arrangements—only by supervising and inspecting these issues can higher-level leaders know what's really going on. If higher-level leaders do not conduct supervision and inspection, can these problems be identified? (No.) They cannot. Therefore, leaders and workers must not only communicate the work arrangements and provide guidance level by level but also supervise

the work level by level when implementing the work arrangements. Regional leaders must supervise the work of district leaders, district leaders must supervise the work of church leaders, and church leaders must supervise the work of each group. Supervision must be carried out level by level. What is the purpose of supervision? It is to facilitate the accurate implementation of the content of the work arrangements according to their specific requirements. Therefore, the task of supervision is very important” (The Word, Vol. 5. The Responsibilities of Leaders and Workers. The Responsibilities of Leaders and Workers (10)). From God’s words, I saw that to perform the duty adequately, leaders and workers must practically supervise and follow up on every item of work, delve into the details, and know and grasp the progress of the work. They should do the work according to God’s requirements and work arrangements. Any violations of the principles found in the work should be promptly addressed through fellowship. Talented people with potential should be cultivated in time, once discovered. This requires practical inspection, inquiry, supervision, and follow-up, which demonstrates a responsible attitude toward one’s duties. In the past, I relied on my personal imaginings, easily handing over work to those I favored without supervising or following up, nor understanding the actual situation in their work. This approach was really irresponsible, and I didn’t fulfill my duties. In the future, I must practice according to God’s words and practically supervise and follow up on the work I am responsible for.

After Li Can was dismissed, I visited the church she was responsible for and met some new believers who could be cultivated. I held gatherings with them to practically understand their states and difficulties, and offered fellowship to resolve these issues. I also had fellowship with the waterers to address difficulties in their work, correcting deviations in their approaches.

I had them focus on fellowshiping the truth about understanding God's work, so that the new believers could lay a solid foundation on the true way as soon as possible. Later, I realized that the problems in watering new members at this church might also exist in other churches. So, I quickly wrote letters to the leaders of the watering groups in other churches. After writing the letters, I still felt uneasy because written communication is not as effective as face-to-face fellowship. Therefore, I wrote to the leaders, hoping they could supervise and follow up on this work in person. Eventually, the leaders replied that these issues also existed at different levels in their churches, and they would supervise and follow up accordingly. It was then that I truly realized the necessity of God's requirements for leaders and workers to practically supervise and follow up on the work.

Through this experience, I've gained some understanding of my own arrogant disposition and also realized how important it is **“to view people and things, and to comport oneself and act, wholly according to God's words, with the truth as one's criterion”** as God says. From now on, I must not act based on my own imaginings. When facing matters, I must first seek the truth and treat people, events, and things around me according to God's words.

41. Being Reassigned Revealed Me

By Wendy, Spain

In 2018, I was making videos in the church. Because I improved quickly in my professional skills, and I usually helped brothers and sisters solve some problems and difficulties, everyone had a good impression of me, and some important tasks were entrusted to me by the leaders. Receiving the leaders' recognition and the high regard of the brothers and sisters gave me a strong sense of accomplishment and increased my enthusiasm. Although I wasn't the team leader, I would promptly identify and analyze the problems in our work. I always tried my best to complete the tasks assigned by the leaders and team leaders, so I felt I had quite a burden for my duty and was relatively obedient. Especially when I saw some brothers and sisters around me becoming negative, slacking off in their duties, and not doing their duties properly because they were dissatisfied with the tasks assigned by the church, I thought that if I encountered such a situation, I wouldn't act like them; I would still be obedient.

One day in 2022, the group leader told me that there was a shortage of people for text-based work. Since the workload in our group wasn't heavy, and I had some writing skills and could usually fellowship the truth to solve some problems, after a comprehensive evaluation, the leaders decided to arrange for me to do text-based work. When I heard this news, I simply couldn't believe my ears. I thought, "Are they going to adjust my duty? I'm fine staying in this group. The brothers and sisters approve of me, and people from other groups even come to me for advice. This makes me look really good! If I go to do text-based work, I don't understand the principles, and I don't know how long it will take for me to catch up with the others

since I'm starting from scratch, doesn't that mean I'll be the worst in the group? I just can't understand, why did they have to choose me?" I thought of some sisters I knew who had good writing skills. Not long after they started doing text-based work, they were reassigned because they were unfit for the job. I felt that I wasn't as good as them, and if I couldn't do the work well, it would be humiliating. No matter how I compared the two, I felt that my current duty was more stable and prestigious. The more I thought this way, the more I felt that the leaders were too hasty in their consideration, that they hadn't understood my strengths clearly before transferring me. I complained to the team leader, "Have the leaders not evaluated this matter carefully? I'm better at making videos. Text-based work is not my strength; if I am to go, I won't do it well. Shouldn't they reconsider based on my strengths?" I thought the team leader would empathize with me from my perspective, and maybe talk with the leaders about reconsidering my adjustment. But she fellowshiped that I should consider the needs of the church's work first. I realized that I shouldn't argue, and should obey first.

Later, I looked up the principles regarding the adjustment of duties. God's words say: **"The house of God arranges for people to perform certain duties not based on people's preferences, but based on the needs of the work and whether someone's performing that duty can achieve results. Would you say that the house of God should arrange duties based on individual preferences? Should it use people based on the condition of satisfying their personal preferences? (No.) Which of these aligns with the principles of the house of God in utilizing people? Which aligns with the truth principles? It is choosing people according to the needs of the work in God's house and the results of people performing their duties"** (The Word, Vol. 4. Exposing Antichrists. Item Twelve: They Want to Withdraw When They Have No Status or No Hope of Gaining Blessings). After reading

God's words, I understood this: In the church, assigning duties according to individual strengths is only one aspect. The most important thing is to do it based on the needs of the church's work. Now there's a shortage of people for the text-based work, and the workload within my group isn't heavy. Even if I am absent, it will not delay the progress. I should consider the church's work first, setting aside my personal choices and demands. If I only satisfy my own preferences, that's too selfish. Recognizing this, I did not feel so resistant in my heart anymore.

Later, I read these words of God: **"If one believes in God but does not heed His words, accept the truth, or submit to His arrangements and orchestrations; if they only exhibit certain good behaviors, but are unable to rebel against the flesh, and relinquish nothing of their pride or interests; if, though by appearances they are performing their duty, they still live by their satanic dispositions, and have not in the least given up or changed their satanic philosophies and modes of existence, how, then, could they possibly believe in God? ... However many years they have believed, they have not established a normal relationship with God; no matter what they do or what happens to them, the first thing they think is: 'What do I want to do; what would be in my interest, and what wouldn't; what could happen if I did such-and-such'—these are the things they consider first. They give no consideration whatsoever to what sort of practice would glorify God and bear witness to Him, or satisfy God's intentions, nor do they pray to seek what God's requirements are and what His words say. They never pay attention to what God's intentions or requirements are, and how people must practice in order to satisfy God. Though they may sometimes pray before God and fellowship with Him, they are merely talking to themselves, not sincerely seeking the truth. When they pray**

to God and read His words, they do not relate them to the matters they encounter in real life. So, in the environment arranged by God, how do they treat His sovereignty, arrangements, and orchestrations? When faced with things that do not satisfy their own desires, they avoid them and resist them in their hearts. When faced with things that cause a loss to their interests or prevent their interests' satisfaction, they try every means to seek a way out, striving to maximize their own benefits and fighting to avoid any losses. They do not seek to satisfy God's intentions, but only their own desires. Is this faith in God? Do such people have a relationship with God? No, they do not. They live in a base, sordid, intransigent, and ugly manner. Not only do they have no relationship with God, but they also go against God's sovereignty and arrangements at every turn. They often say, 'May God hold sovereignty over and govern everything in my life. I am willing to let God take the throne and reign and rule in my heart. I am willing to submit to God's arrangements and orchestrations.' However, when the things they are faced with harm their own interests, they cannot submit. Instead of seeking the truth in an environment arranged by God, they seek to turn and escape from that environment. They do not want to submit to God's arrangements and orchestrations, but to do things according to their own will, only insofar as their interests come to no harm. They completely disregard God's intentions, caring only about their own interests, their own circumstances, and their own moods and feelings. **Is this believing in God? (No.)**" (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. One Cannot Be Saved by Believing in Religion or Engaging in Religious Ceremony). From God's words, I saw that when sincere believers in God encounter things that don't accord with their notions or their interests suffer losses, they will actively seek the truth to resolve their corruption, find answers in God's

words, and wait for God's enlightenment and guidance. Those who do not seek the truth and are unreasonable will only fixate on people or situations when they encounter things that don't accord with their notions, and they may even complain about God and refuse to submit to God's orchestrations and arrangements. Linking this to myself, whenever I thought about not being able to be esteemed by others when doing text-based work and being revealed as useless, I tried to justify myself and make excuses, hiding behind my lack of skills, consciously emphasizing my weaknesses, hoping the team leader would sympathize with and understand me, so that I could stay in that group and maintain my status. When things hadn't befallen me and I was enjoying my prestige, I claimed to submit to God and accept things from Him. However, when faced with things that didn't accord with my notions or caused losses to my personal interests, I argued and resisted, felt defiant toward, and dissatisfied with God's orchestrations. Additionally, I looked for fault in others, claiming that the leaders' arrangements were unreasonable. Thinking about it carefully, the leaders were clearly making reasonable adjustments based on the needs of the work, and I did have some writing skills; it wasn't like I was completely unskilled. But because I felt this adjustment would bring harm to my reputation and status, I had complained and resisted. It was truly unreasonable of me! So, I prayed to God, willing to accept this from Him and submit, and try my best to do the text-based work.

After the adjustment of my duty, I saw that most of the brothers and sisters there had better writing skills than I did. Some had previously been leaders, and some had been doing text-based work for years, they had a good grasp of the principles, and they discussed issues and expressed their views clearly and insightfully. I felt quite envious. Unknowingly, I became a bit frustrated, thinking about how I'd just started and I was already so far

behind them. I wondered, “When will I be able to reach their level?” But I did not become too discouraged. Knowing that I was quite deficient in terms of the principles, the profession, and other aspects, I spent time familiarizing myself with the principles and sought guidance and learned from the brothers and sisters when I didn’t understand something. But since I was new to this duty, I didn’t have any good insights when discussing issues with the brothers and sisters. Occasionally, when I did express some views, they were inappropriate, and I felt quite embarrassed. At this rate, the more I worked, the worse I would appear—to say nothing of getting people to esteem me. I worried that the brothers and sisters would think that my caliber was too poor, and that I was not worth cultivating. Seeing how important and challenging this work was, I became even more worried about not doing well and getting adjusted. That would be very humiliating. From then on, I was always half-heartedly doing my duty. I stared at the computer screen, my mind empty. I lacked interest and motivation to learn the profession. There was a constant inexplicable sense of despondency in my heart. Sometimes, I even fantasized about when the leaders might change their minds and send me back, thinking it would be better than being revealed as useless and going unnoticed here. Later, the sister who was coaching me in the profession identified some issues of principle in my duties. When she analyzed them, she even pointed out these problems and deviations in the group. I felt very embarrassed. Unconsciously, memories of when I used to make videos came to mind. Back then, I was prestigious. People came to me with questions, and I was the one pointing out mistakes to others most of the time. Now, however, I had become a negative example, and constantly had my mistakes pointed out. It was simply two extremes! This contrast made me even more negative. I even thought about telling the leaders that I wasn’t capable of this work and wanted to go back

to make videos. But I was afraid others would say I wasn't being obedient, so I reluctantly did my duties.

One day, I suddenly remembered God's words that said: **"If you don't resolve problems in a timely manner when they occur, once these problems within you accumulate and become increasingly serious, and your enthusiasm or resolve is already no longer sufficient to support you in the performance of your duties, you will collapse into negativity, even to the point that there is a danger of you leaving God, and you certainly cannot stand firm"** (The Word, Vol. 6. On the Pursuit of the Truth I. What It Means to Pursue the Truth (11)). I realized that not addressing this negative state was very dangerous. Although I outwardly did my duty, my heart wasn't in it. I often reminisced about the times when I was esteemed and praised by others, and I never gave it my best effort. I realized that this problem had to be resolved, and I couldn't continue to be perfunctory and dupe myself like this. Later, when reflecting, I read God's words: **"Let no person think of themselves as perfect, distinguished, noble, or distinct from others; all this is brought about by man's arrogant disposition and ignorance. Always thinking of oneself as set apart—this is caused by an arrogant disposition; never being able to accept their shortcomings, and never being able to confront their mistakes and failures—this is caused by an arrogant disposition; never permitting others to be higher than themselves, or to be better than themselves—this is caused by an arrogant disposition; never allowing others' strengths to surpass or exceed their own—this is caused by an arrogant disposition; never permitting others to have better thoughts, suggestions, and views than themselves, and, when they discover that others are better than themselves, becoming negative, not wishing to speak, feeling distressed and dejected, and becoming upset—all of this is caused by an arrogant**

disposition. An arrogant disposition can make you protective of your reputation, unable to accept others' corrections, unable to confront your shortcomings, and unable to accept your own failures and mistakes. More than that, when someone is better than you, it can cause hatred and jealousy to emerge in your heart, and you can feel constrained, such that you do not wish to do your duty and become perfunctory in performing it. An arrogant disposition can cause these behaviors and practices to emerge in you" (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. The Principles That Should Guide One's Conduct). God's words helped me find the reason for my negativity. I always thought I was capable and held myself in high regard, wanting to be in a preeminent position, with people circling and praising me wherever I went. When I couldn't gain others' esteem or step into the limelight, I became negative and wanted to escape the situation. This was all due to my nature being too arrogant. I had just started practicing doing text-based work, and there were so many things I didn't understand or know how to do. No principle can be learned just by listening or reading it a few times; it requires a period of practical learning. During this time, mistakes and failures are inevitable. People who really have reason can all approach these things correctly. But I had no self-awareness at all. Wherever I went, I wanted to show that I was special. I was clearly just starting out, but I was eager to achieve something to showcase my abilities, so that my brothers and sisters would see that I had good caliber. When I couldn't do well, fell short, or wasn't in the limelight, I became negative and slacked off, losing the motivation to learn the profession. I even thought about giving up my duty and leaving. I realized I was truly arrogant and thought I was such a big shot. The suffering I endured was purely self-inflicted.

I began to think, “Why was I so motivated when making videos in the past, but now that I’m doing text-based work, I can never muster any enthusiasm?” Later, I read a passage of God’s words and gained some understanding of my state. God’s words say: **“If people have a heart which loves the truth, they will have the strength to pursue the truth, and can work hard at practicing the truth. They can abandon that which should be abandoned, and let go of that which should be let go of. In particular, things that pertain to your own fame, gain, and status should be let go of. If you do not let them go, it means you do not love the truth and do not have the strength to pursue the truth. When things happen to you, you must seek the truth, and practice the truth. If, at those times when you need to practice the truth, you always have a selfish heart and cannot let go of your own self-interest, you will be unable to put the truth into practice. If you never seek or practice the truth in any circumstance, you are not a person who loves the truth. No matter how many years you have believed in God, you will not obtain the truth. Some people are always pursuing fame, gain, and self-interest. Whatever work the church arranges for them, they always deliberate, thinking, ‘Will this benefit me? If it will, I’ll do it; if it won’t, then I won’t.’ A person like this does not practice the truth—so can they perform their duty well? They most certainly cannot. Even if you have not done evil, you are still not a person who practices the truth. If you do not pursue the truth, do not love positive things, and whatever befalls you, you only care about your own reputation and status, your own self-interest, and what is good for you, then you are a person who is only driven by self-interest, and who is selfish and base”** (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. Part Three). God’s words say that if people have a heart that loves the truth, when things befall them that

touch on their vanity, status, and interests, they can let go of it, and rebel against their flesh to practice the truth. I reflected on how, when I was making videos, I thought I was burdened and obedient and considered myself a person who pursued the truth. Only when faced with reality did I realize that what I did before was not me trying to satisfy God, that I was just doing some work when it didn't involve my own interests. Now, I kept wanting to return to making videos not because I loved that duty, but because I couldn't let go of the support and esteem of my brothers and sisters. Although, on the surface, I didn't have the title of team leader, my brothers and sisters had a good impression of me in their hearts. Every time I solved a problem or did something well, I received their esteem and praise, which I enjoyed immensely. Therefore, no matter how much of a price I paid or how much I suffered, I had no complaints. In contrast, doing text-based work made me feel humiliated. Here, I had to learn everything from scratch, and no one paid attention to me. It was impossible for me to be a teacher to others as I was before. Not only did I have to put aside myself and ask others basic questions, I was so deficient in this profession that I also had to constantly accept guidance. I didn't want to face my deficiencies; I just wanted to revel in bouquets and applause, and enjoy the esteem and praise of others. I even fantasized that one day the leaders would let me start making videos again, so that I could continue to be surrounded and praised by people. But this result never came. Instead, what came was the continuous revelation of my corruption and shortcomings. Therefore, I became negative and upset, and lost my motivation in doing my duty. At this point, I realized that in the past I had just done my duty for the sake of reputation and status, and I hadn't regarded my duty as a responsibility at all.

During that time, I frequently sought and reflected on my state. I read God's words, which said: **"For antichrists, status and reputation are their life. No matter how they live, no matter what environment they live in, no matter what work they do, no matter what they pursue, what their goals are, what their life's direction is, it all revolves around having a good reputation and a high status. And this aim does not change; they can never put aside such things. This is the true face of antichrists, and their essence. You could put them in a primeval forest deep in the mountains, and still they would not put aside their pursuit of reputation and status. You can put them among any group of people, and all they can think about is still reputation and status. Although antichrists also believe in God, they see the pursuit of reputation and status as equivalent to faith in God and give it equal weight. Which is to say, as they walk the path of faith in God, they also pursue their own reputation and status. It can be said that in antichrists' hearts, they believe that pursuit of the truth in their faith in God is the pursuit of reputation and status; the pursuit of reputation and status is also the pursuit of the truth, and to gain reputation and status is to gain the truth and life. If they feel that they have no reputation, gains, or status, that no one admires them, or esteems them, or follows them, then they are very disappointed, they believe there is no point in believing in God, no value to it, and they say to themselves, 'Is such faith in god a failure? Is it hopeless?' They often deliberate such things in their hearts, they deliberate how they can carve a place out for themselves in the house of God, how they can have a lofty reputation in the church, so that people listen when they talk, and support them when they act, and follow them wherever they go; so that they have the final say in the church, and fame, gain, and status—they really focus on such things in**

their hearts. These are what such people pursue. Why are they always thinking about such things? After reading the words of God, after hearing sermons, do they really not understand all this, are they really not able to discern all this? Are the words of God and the truth really not able to change their notions, ideas, and opinions? That is not the case at all. The problem lies in them, it is wholly because they do not love the truth, because, in their hearts, they are averse to the truth, and as a result, they are utterly unreceptive to the truth—which is determined by their nature essence” (The Word, Vol. 4. Exposing Antichrists. Item Nine (Part Three)). The words of God expose that antichrists particularly love reputation and status. They believe in God, forsake things, and expend themselves all for the sake of reputation and status. Once they lose their status, it's as if their life is taken away; they lose interest and motivation in everything. Reflecting on my own behavior, I realized I was just like an antichrist, craving admiration and worship from others, and even considering the pursuit of reputation and status as a positive thing. For many years, I have been chasing after it. At home, my father often told me to “stand out above the rest” and “bring honor to the family” and that being a successful person was the only way to have a future. At school, teachers instilled in me the idea that “Man struggles upward; water flows downward.” These things were continuously instilled in my thoughts, making me increasingly fond of reputation and status, and willing to endure any hardship for it. During my school years, in order to achieve good grades and gain the praise and admiration of teachers and classmates, I would drink coffee to stay up late doing assignments, and even attend classes while sick. For the past few years in the church, while making videos, I outwardly endured hardship and paid the price, learning skills and doing more work, all with the goal of gaining others' admiration. When my duty

was changed and I no longer received admiration from others, and even revealed my own shortcomings and inadequacies due to mistakes, I became discouraged, misunderstanding and resenting the circumstances God arranged, and lost motivation in doing my duty. I saw that I was living for reputation and status, constantly thinking about how to gain others' admiration. What I pursued was completely contrary to what God requires. I thought of God's words that say: **"God loathes nothing more than when people pursue status, and yet you still mulishly compete for status, you unfailingly cherish and protect it, always trying to take it for yourself. And in nature, is all of this not antagonistic to God?"** (The Word, Vol. 4. Exposing Antichrists. Item Nine (Part Three)). Although I haven't yet resorted to winning people over, establishing myself, or creating an independent kingdom for the sake of status like an antichrist, and haven't yet committed any obvious evil deeds, my intentions and views on pursuit were wrong. I constantly sought to have a place in people's hearts. Continuing down this path is dangerous and detestable to God. Realizing this, I was very grateful for God's protection.

Through this adjustment in my duties, I was prompted to reflect on the wrong path I was taking and to turn back in time. This is God's salvation for me. Even though I no longer had the opportunity to stand out and be in the spotlight, I was able to submit sincerely. I also felt some regret for wasting so much time over the past few years. If I had put the same effort into pursuing truth and knowing myself instead of seeking status, I would be more reasonable, more obedient to God, and not as rebellious and corrupt as I was now. To address these issues, I read two more passages of God's words. Almighty God says: **"If you wish to give all your loyalty in all things to satisfy God's intentions, you cannot do it by just performing one duty; you must accept any commission God bestows**

upon you. Whether it is to your tastes and matches your interests, or is something you do not enjoy, have never done before, or is difficult, you should still accept it and submit. Not only must you accept it, but you must also proactively cooperate, and learn about it, while experiencing and entering. Even if you suffer hardship, are tired, humiliated, or are ostracized, you must still give it all your loyalty. Only by practicing in this way will you be able to give all your loyalty in all things and satisfy God's intentions. You must regard it as your duty to perform, not as personal business. How should you understand duties? As something that the Creator—God—gives someone to do; this is how people's duties come about. The commission that God gives you is your duty, and it is perfectly natural and justified that you perform your duty as God demands. If it is clear to you that this duty is God's commission, and that this is God's love and God's blessing coming upon you, then you will be able to accept your duty with a God-loving heart, and you will be able to be considerate of God's intentions as you perform your duty, and you will be able to overcome all difficulties to satisfy God. Those who truly expend themselves for God could never refuse God's commission; they could never refuse any duty. No matter what duty God entrusts you with, regardless of what difficulties it entails, you should not refuse it, but accept it. This is the path of practice, which is to practice the truth and give all your loyalty in all things, in order to satisfy God. What is the focus here? It is on the words 'in all things.' 'All things' does not necessarily mean things that you like or are good at, much less things with which you are familiar. Sometimes they will be things you are not good at, things you need to learn, things which are difficult, or things where you must suffer. However, regardless of what thing it is, as long as God has entrusted you with it, you must

accept it from Him; you must accept it and perform the duty well, giving it all your loyalty and satisfying God's intentions. This is the path of practice" (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. Part Three).

"Making a fool of yourself is a good thing. It helps you to see your own deficiencies and your love of vanity. It shows you where your problems lie and it helps you to understand clearly that you are not a perfect person. There are no perfect people and making a fool of yourself is very normal. All people experience times where they make a fool of themselves or are embarrassed. All people fail, experience setbacks, and have weaknesses. Making a fool of yourself is not bad. When you make a fool of yourself but do not feel embarrassed, and do not feel depressed deep inside, that does not mean you are thick-skinned; it means that you do not care whether making a fool of yourself will affect your reputation and it means that your vanity no longer occupies your thoughts. It means that you have matured in your humanity. This is wonderful! Is this not a good thing? It is a good thing. Do not think that you have not performed well or that you have bad luck, and do not look for the objective causes behind it. It is normal. You may make a fool of yourself, others may make fools of themselves, everyone may make a fool of themselves—eventually you will discover that everyone is the same, all are ordinary people, all mortals, that no one is greater than anyone else, and no one is any better than anyone else. Everyone makes a fool of themselves sometimes, so no one should make fun of anyone else. Once you have experienced numerous failures, you gradually mature in your humanity; so whenever you encounter these things again, you will no longer be constrained, and they will not have an impact on the normal performance of your duty. Your humanity will be normal, and when your humanity is normal, your reason will be

normal too” (The Word, Vol. 6. On the Pursuit of the Truth I. How to Pursue the Truth (2)).

After reading God’s words, I found a path to practice in this situation. Whether or not I would be admired by others or have opportunities to stand out, I must submit to the environment arranged by God and treat my duty sincerely, putting my heart and strength into it. It was my responsibility and what I should do. Later, even though sometimes the work I had finished still had mistakes, and when others pointed out many issues, I felt bad, I no longer reacted negatively. The more mistakes and failures I encountered, the more they pushed me to return to God in time to know my corruption, analyzing and reflecting on my deviations and lacking. This also deepened my memory of certain principles, which benefited both my performance of the duty and my life entry. With this understanding, my mindset improved, and I no longer cared as much about how others viewed me. In terms of the profession, I analyzed my deviations and problems, sought help from brothers and sisters when I didn’t understand something, and looked for and entered into relevant principles. I also learned from others’ good practices. Regarding my state, I used my spare time to reflect and ponder, knowing myself based on God’s words concerning my revealed corruptions. After practicing this for a while, I started to like my current duty, and the results of my duty improved compared to before. Looking back on this process, I’ve realized God’s earnest intentions. Doing my duty in this environment has brought me many gains. It was through these failures and revelations that I could see clearly my lacking and true stature, learn to submit to God’s sovereignty and arrangements, and seek the principles more in my duties. Moreover, constantly being tempered in this environment has matured me in my humanity, making me less impulsive and fragile, better able to treat my lacking correctly, and start learning to seek God’s intentions and truth principles. All these are training and perfection for me.

Experiencing this adjustment in my duties, I have come to understand that no matter what duty we're doing, whether our reputation is upheld or whether we are admired by others, these things are not important. What matters is whether we can submit to God and have testimonies of practicing the truth. In the past, when I saw others become negative and disobedient after their duties were adjusted, I looked down on them and thought I was better. Facing the facts now, I saw that my nature was too arrogant, and I was no more submissive to God than others. Through the situations arranged by God, I have gained some knowledge of myself and undergone some changes. I am truly grateful for God's salvation from my heart!

42. Discernment With God's Words Never Fails

By Christina, USA

In April 2021, I was living in a house with Harlow and a few other sisters. In the beginning, I often saw that she was talking with others about her state, and sometimes chatted about it over meals. I thought about how she was even able to make use of mealtime—she really focused on life entry and was someone who sought the truth. Then once when we were chatting, Harlow told me she really cared about others' facial expressions and opinions, and if someone took a bad tone with her, she'd usually assume that they were looking down on her, and told me that she was deceitful. She also said she always vied with others over name and gain, and was too concerned with her reputation and status. I was thinking, we hadn't known each other long, so her being able to tell me about her fatal flaws and her weaknesses meant she was simple and open. I noticed in our later interactions that she really did have a complicated mindset. She really cared about people's expressions and opinions, and was suspicious of others. Sometimes when brothers and sisters pointed out her problems, she would wonder if they looked down on her, then afterward she'd open up about herself, saying that she was always suspicious of others, that she was very deceitful, and so on. At first, I thought she was just kind of sensitive and fragile. I felt that everyone has faults and problems, and as brothers and sisters, we should have more tolerance and forgiveness for each other. Also, she was able to open up and understand herself after revealing corruption, so she should be a person that's able to accept the truth. So I didn't think much of it. Generally, when she told me about her state, I'd patiently listen to her pour her heart out. In conversation I was also cautiously attentive to her mood, afraid I'd be careless and say something that hurt her. For that

reason, she liked talking with me. It showed from her words and what they implied that she felt I had a good temperament and personality and was generous, and that she liked people like me. However, every time we chatted, it was about her state of being suspicious or caring about face. Sometimes a little chat would stretch on for an hour, and this really held up my duties. But seeing how much she trusted me, I was afraid that she'd be hurt if I didn't listen to her, so I was embarrassed to interrupt her. Some things happened later that gradually changed how I saw her.

One time, Sister Kay didn't take it too seriously when Harlow criticized her for not folding a comforter well. Harlow got mad and wouldn't let it go, and insisted that Kay do what she wanted. Kay saw that Harlow generally made people coax her and go along with her to please her. Kay told her she was too focused on status and always wanted people around her, which in essence meant she wanted to control them. Afterward, Harlow went to open up to Kay, crying and explaining that she wasn't like what Kay had said, and that Kay had misunderstood her. Kay apologized, but Harlow still couldn't let it go, and gave her the silent treatment. After that, she often isolated herself and didn't talk with us much. Once when she was talking with me about her state, she said she saw the other sisters were talking with Kay a lot, so she suspected everyone liked Kay, and that they looked down on and excluded her. Then she deliberately avoided everyone, and she thought Kay was being insincere when she spoke with her. Afterward, she said she had poor humanity and that second-guessing Kay in that way was really deceitful. But she didn't change after that. She was sulky with us for half a month because of it, and everyone felt really constrained. I was pretty taken aback and couldn't make heads or tails of it. Why didn't she seek the truth and learn a lesson when faced with issues? After that I was thinking about how she only tended to get into a huff and

sulk, and that we were all brothers and sisters, and we just needed to help her more out of love. One time, problems cropped up in a video she was producing. In a gathering, the team leader said producers had to take the main responsibility for issues in videos. Harlow assumed that was targeted at her—that the team leader thought she had poor caliber and looked down on her. She had a long face and was gloomy for days. A leader fellowshipped with her after that, and said she didn't accept the truth and was overly sensitive, and that it would be dangerous for her to remain that way. Harlow started crying when she heard that. She said she was too corrupt and wouldn't be saved by God. Seeing her so upset, the leader fellowshipped with her on God's intention so that she wouldn't misunderstand God and could reflect further upon her problem and have entry. She didn't say anything at the time, and the leader thought she would be able to change. Surprisingly, however, she said in a gathering that she couldn't accept what the leader said about her and had been negative for days. Later, she told some brothers and sisters that the team leader had disliked her for her low caliber, which had made her feel constrained. She didn't know how to get through it, and was crying as she spoke. The brothers and sisters were sympathetic. Things like this were always happening. After someone fellowshipped with her, she'd always "know" herself and acknowledge her problem. But then she'd throw another fit a few days later when something else unpleasant happened.

I was very confused to see her acting that way. Since she usually seemed to know herself, why didn't she ever change? If the others said anything that impacted her pride, she'd assume they were looking down on her and then take everything the wrong way. Was there a problem with her humanity and her understanding? I couldn't fully understand this, so I prayed to God in seeking, and I sought out and fellowshipped with others

who understood the truth. A sister told me that Harlow understood everything after years of faith, but she didn't practice the truth and was often negative. That meant she didn't truly know herself. That sister also sent me a passage of God's words: **"When some people fellowship their self-knowledge, the first thing out of their mouths is, 'I'm a devil, a living Satan, someone who resists God. I rebel against Him and betray Him; I'm a viper, an evil person who should be cursed.' Is this true self-knowledge? They only speak in generalities. Why do they not offer examples? Why do they not bring the shameful things they did out into the light of day for dissection? Some undiscerning people hear them and think, 'Now, that is true self-knowledge! To know themselves as a devil, and even to curse themselves—what heights they've reached!' Many people, new believers in particular, are prone to be misled by this talk. They think that the speaker is pure and has spiritual understanding, that this is someone who loves the truth, and is qualified for leadership. However, once they interact with them for a while, they find that this is not so, that the person is not whom they imagined, but is exceptionally false and deceitful, skilled at disguise and pretension, which comes as a great disappointment. On what basis can people be deemed to truly know themselves? You cannot just consider what they say—the key is to determine whether they are able to practice and accept the truth. For those that truly understand the truth, they not only have true knowledge of themselves, most importantly, they are able to practice the truth. They not only speak about their true understanding, but are also able to truly do what they say. That is, their words and actions are completely aligned. If what they say sounds coherent and agreeable, but they don't do it, don't live it out, then in this they have become Pharisees, they are hypocrites, and**

absolutely not people who truly know themselves. Many people sound very coherent when they fellowship the truth, but don't realize when they have revelations of a corrupt disposition. Are these people who know themselves? If people do not know themselves, are they people who understand the truth? All who do not know themselves are people who do not understand the truth, and all who speak empty words of self-knowledge have false spirituality, they are liars. Some people sound very coherent when they speak words and doctrines, but the state in their spirits is numb and dull-witted, they are unperceptive, and they are unresponsive to any issues. It may be said that they are numb, but sometimes, listening to them speak, their spirits seem quite sharp. For example, right after an incident, they are able to know themselves straight away: 'Just now an idea was made apparent in me. I thought about it and realized that it was deceitful, that I was deceiving God.' Some undiscerning people are envious when they hear this, saying: 'This person immediately realizes when they have a revelation of corruption, and is able to open up and fellowship about it, too. They are so quick to react, their spirit is sharp, they're much better than us. This is truly someone who pursues the truth.' Is this an accurate way of measuring people? (No.) So what should be the basis for evaluating whether people really know themselves? It must not only be what comes out of their mouths. You must also look at what is really manifested in them. The simplest method is to look at whether they are able to practice the truth—this is what's most crucial. Their ability to practice the truth proves that they truly know themselves, because those who truly know themselves manifest repentance, and only when people manifest repentance do they truly know themselves'' (The Word, Vol.

3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. Only Self-Knowledge Is of Aid in Pursuing the Truth).

I learned from God's words that when measuring if someone loves and accepts the truth, if they truly know themselves, it's not about seeing how well they can verbally know themselves, or how well they spout words and doctrines. Rather, it's about what they actually live out in the face of events, if they can practice the truth, if they really repent and change, and if the understanding they talk about and their actual entry match up. Some people spout all the right words and doctrines, but when they face things they do not practice the truth whatsoever, and act instead based on their satanic disposition. That's someone who doesn't accept the truth. Some people can open up no matter what kind of thoughts they reveal, and know their corruption, making people think they're simple. They say nothing, however, about the real motives behind this, and they don't dissect the essence of their corrupt disposition at all. They seem simple and open, but they're actually misleading and lying to people, and are really deceitful. Some people's self-knowledge is just an illusion—they will verbally acknowledge their mistakes, say they're devils and Satans, curse and condemn themselves, and they know themselves to be a complete mess; as for the specific evil things they've done, however, the hidden motives and goals behind them, or the consequences they've led to, they don't say a word. Looking at Harlow, she liked to talk to people about her state, and seemed to really pursue and seek the truth. She was always saying things like, "I have poor humanity, I'm deceitful, I'm malicious." From the outside it looked like she could really know herself, but she didn't practice the truth or have entry whatsoever when faced with events. She didn't resolve her own corrupt disposition at all. Two years ago, others had evaluated her as being suspicious of people and being focused on reputation and status, but she still hadn't changed whatsoever. Clearly, she usually just talked about doctrine. This was giving people a false impression, and she was

hoodwinking people. The knowledge she talked about and what she actually lived out didn't match up at all.

Later I read fellowship from God on which people are true brothers and sisters, and which people aren't, and I gained some discernment over Harlow. God's words say: **"Only those who love the truth belong to God's house; only they are real brothers and sisters. Do you think that all those who often attend assembly in God's house are brothers and sisters? Not necessarily. What people are not brothers and sisters? (Those who are averse to the truth, who do not accept the truth.) Those who do not accept the truth and are averse to it are all evil people. They are all people without a conscience or reason. None of them are those whom God saves. These people are devoid of humanity, they do not attend to their proper work, and they run amok doing bad things. They live by satanic philosophies and employ crafty maneuvers and use, wheedle, and cheat others. They do not accept the slightest bit of the truth, and they have infiltrated God's house solely to gain blessings. Why do we call them disbelievers? Because they are averse to the truth, and they do not accept it. As soon as the truth is fellowshipped, they lose interest, they are averse to it, they cannot stand to hear about it, they feel it is boring and cannot stay seated. They are clearly disbelievers and nonbelievers. You must not regard them as brothers and sisters. ... So what do they live by? Without question, they live by the philosophies of Satan, they are always being wily and cunning, they do not have a life of normal humanity. They never pray to God or seek the truth, but handle everything using human tricks, tactics, and philosophies for worldly dealings—which makes for an exhausting and painful existence. They interact with the brothers and sisters in the same way that they interact with nonbelievers, they follow satanic**

philosophies and lie and cheat. They like to start arguments and split hairs. No matter what group they are living in, they always look to see who is aligned with who, and who is teamed up with who. When they speak, they are carefully observing other people's reactions, they are always on the lookout, trying not to offend anyone. They are always following these philosophies for worldly dealings to deal with all the things around them and their relationships with others. That is what makes their existence so exhausting. Though they may seem active among other people, in reality, only they know their struggles, and if you were to look closely at their lives, you'd feel it's exhausting. For a matter involving fame, gain, or face, they insist on clarifying who is right or wrong, who is superior or inferior, and must argue to prove a point. Others don't want to hear it. People say, 'Can you simplify what you're saying? Can you be straightforward? Why do you have to be so trivial?' Their thoughts are so complicated and convoluted, and they live such an exhausting life without realizing the underlying problems. Why can't they seek the truth and be honest? Because they are averse to the truth and don't want to be honest. So, what do they rely on in life? (Philosophies for worldly dealings and human methods.) Depending on human methods to act tends to lead to results in which one ends up either being laughed at or revealing an ugly side of oneself. And so, on closer examination, their actions, the things they spend all day doing—they all relate to their own face, fame, gain, and vanity. It's as if they're living in a web, they have to rationalize or make excuses for everything, and they are always speaking for their own sake. Their thinking is complicated, they talk so much nonsense, their words are so tangled. They're always arguing over what's right and wrong, there's no end to it. If they're not trying to gain face, they're competing for reputation

and status, and there is never a time when they are not living for these things. And what is the ultimate consequence? They may have gained face, but everyone is sick and tired of them. People have seen through them and realized that they are devoid of the truth reality, that they are not someone who sincerely believes in God. When the leaders and workers or other brothers and sisters use a few words to prune them, they stubbornly refuse to accept, they insist on trying to rationalize or make excuses, and they try to pass the buck. During assemblies they defend themselves, start arguments, and stir up trouble among God's chosen ones. In their hearts, they're thinking, 'Is there really nowhere for me to argue my case?' What kind of person is this? Is this someone who loves the truth? Is this someone who believes in God? When they hear anyone say something that doesn't align with their intentions, they always want to argue and demand an explanation; they get tangled up in who's right and who's wrong, they do not seek the truth and treat it according to the truth principles. No matter how simple a matter is, they have to make it so complicated—they're just asking for trouble, they deserve to be so exhausted!" (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. Part Three). God's words reveal that some people like to bicker over right and wrong. They don't accept the truth; rather, they are averse to it. They don't seek the truth in the face of things, nor do they reflect on or know themselves. They're always defending and justifying themselves for the sake of their face and status. That kind of person has a complicated mindset and a deceitful nature. It's not only tiring for them, but they also bring others pain and antipathy. That kind of person isn't a true brother or sister. I thought again of Harlow. When someone's inadvertent remark touched on her pride and hurt her, she'd suspect they disliked her and become biased against them. Then she'd falsely open up to justify and

defend herself, or she'd talk about knowing herself as a way to bring up that person's problems. She was always bickering over right and wrong. For example, when the team leader gave her some suggestions about work, she suspected the team leader disliked her and lost her temper. Then afterward in a gathering, by means of "opening up" she spread around that the team leader thought little of her, so that everyone would sympathize with her and develop a critical opinion about the team leader. People usually had to tiptoe around her in their interactions with her, watching the look on her face, taking her pride into account, fearing that a word out of place might impact her state. Interacting with her was really oppressive, and not liberating. Besides, the fact that she was always easily negative and overthinking things seriously impacted work progress. I used to think that she was just sensitive and fragile, that she just tended to get into a huff and sulk when things didn't go her way. I thought this was a fault in normal humanity, and didn't constitute any real disturbance or disruption for brothers and sisters or for the church's work. But lining it up with the facts, I saw that she had actually unwittingly disturbed brothers' and sisters' states as well as the life of the church. She had also impacted the normal progress of the church's work. Going by her consistent behavior, she didn't accept the truth at all, and was really deceitful. She had been a disturbance to the brothers and sisters and hadn't played a positive role at all—she was a disbeliever. In the end, the leader learned of her general behavior, took her duty away, and had her isolated for reflection.

After that, I read a passage of God's words exposing people's corrupt dispositions. Through this I gained some more discernment of the disposition hidden behind Harlow's words. God's words say: **"Deceitfulness can usually be seen on the outside: Someone beats around the bush or uses flowery language, and no one can read what**

they are thinking. That is deceitfulness. What is the primary characteristic of wickedness? It's that their words sound especially pleasing, and everything seems right on the surface. There doesn't appear to be any problem, and things look pretty good from every angle. When they do something, you don't see them using any particular means, and outwardly, there is no sign of weak points or flaws, yet they achieve their goal. They do things in an extremely secretive manner. This is how antichrists mislead people. People and matters like these are the most difficult to discern. Some people often say the right things, use good-sounding excuses, and employ certain doctrines, sayings, or actions that conform to human affection to pull the wool over people's eyes. They feign one thing while doing another in order to achieve their ulterior purpose. This is wickedness, but most people consider these behaviors to be deceitful. People have a relatively limited understanding and dissection of wickedness. Actually, wickedness is more difficult to discern than deceitfulness because it is more secretive, and its methods and actions are more sophisticated" (The

Word, Vol. 4. Exposing Antichrists. Item Five: They Mislead, Draw In, Threaten, and Control People). God's words expose that those with evil dispositions would say some things that sound nice and right, that sound agreeable, but hidden behind those things are ulterior motives that cannot be easily discerned. I couldn't help but think of Harlow's behavior. She usually liked to talk with people about her state so that they saw she was very focused on life entry, and that she sought and pursued the truth. But in reality, she was intentionally creating this pseudo-spiritual appearance to deceive others into being well-disposed to her and thinking highly of her. She acted like she was talking about her state, but she was actually grumbling, seeking to be comforted, venting her dissatisfaction, and playing for sympathy. She even took up the

time of people doing their duty. But at that time I couldn't see through her motives or discern what sort of person she really was. I just always fellowshiped with her kindly, helping and supporting her. I helped her enthusiastically whenever I saw her struggling in life, and I considered her first for anything beneficial. Now I finally saw from the exposure of God's words that she had an evil nature, that she was misleading in both word and deed, and that she was hoodwinking and deceiving everyone.

I reflected on myself after that. Why hadn't I had any discernment over Harlow? As I reflected, I saw a mistaken perspective I'd had. I had taken her being able to talk about her state as being simple and open, as practicing the truth, and hadn't paid attention to discerning her words. Only through God's words did I see what being simple and open truly is. God's words say: **"Honesty means giving your heart to God, being genuine with God in all things, being open with Him in all things, never hiding the facts, not trying to deceive those above and below you, and not doing things only to curry favor with God. In short, to be honest is to be pure in your actions and words, and to deceive neither God nor man. ... If your words are riddled with excuses and valueless justifications, then I say that you are someone who is loath to put the truth into practice. If you have many confidences that you are reluctant to share, if you are highly averse to laying bare your secrets—your difficulties—before others to seek the way of the light, then I say that you are someone who will not attain salvation easily, and who will not easily emerge from the darkness"** (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. Three Admonitions). I saw from God's words that being simple and open is principally opening up in fellowship when you face problems or difficulties, or reveal corruptions, not wrapping yourself up in disguise or concealing facts. Opening up is principally to seek the truth in order to quickly resolve problems and

difficulties. Through opening up and letting others see the essence of their corruption, brothers and sisters can lay their hearts bare with one another. Opening up in this way is edifying and beneficial. Being simple and open mainly depends on a person's intentions and motives, and the results achieved. If they talk about prejudices, small household matters and gossip, without any real self-reflection or understanding, they aren't being genuinely simple and open. They're just venting about what they don't like and covertly criticizing others for their problems. There's no edification or help for people in that kind of openness. Some people even act like they're open in order to pretend they're honest people who accept the truth, so that others look up to them. By opening up like that, they are exalting themselves and showing off in a covert way—they are misleading people. When it came to Harlow opening up about her self-knowledge, it was mostly her baseless suspicions of others that she opened up about, as well as the thoughts and ideas she revealed. She never talked about her corrupt dispositions, her hidden intentions, or her motives. She didn't open up to seek the truth and resolve her corruption, but rather to pour out her grievances, so people would feel sorry for her, comfort her, and sympathize with her. She would also use it to justify and defend herself, so that she wouldn't be misunderstood. That way she could protect her image in others' eyes. Her openness didn't resolve her corrupt disposition, and it didn't bring brothers and sisters any benefits or edification. So she wasn't being simple and open—she was playing games and being tricky. I gained some internal clarity once I realized that. I saw clearly that Harlow wasn't someone who sought the truth, and that she wasn't simple and open. She was actually really deceitful and evil.

I reflected on myself after that. I'd interacted with Harlow for nearly a year and usually had some awareness of her general issues. So why hadn't I

gained any discernment over her until now? Reflecting on it, I realized that I hadn't been looking at people and events through the lens of God's words. Rather, I'd been looking at people's appearances through my own notions and imaginings. I'd viewed her superficially opening up and wanting to share her state with others as her loving and seeking the truth. I hadn't looked at her motives in things, or what was actually achieved. I also hadn't looked at the consistent methods and approaches she took in word and deed, and hadn't discerned things through God's words. That's why I couldn't see through her essence or gain discernment over her and even treated her like a sister, always making allowances for her, helping and supporting her with love. I was so foolish! Through this experience, I understood that discerning whether a person loves and pursues the truth isn't about how much they like to seek out people in fellowship or how well they talk about self-knowledge. Rather, it's about whether they can seek the truth and practice God's words when facing things, and if they have real entry and change later. I also realized how important it is to discern a person's essence based on God's words. You'll be misled if you can't discern all kinds of people. You'll love people blindly, and help and support the wrong people as brothers and sisters. This will ultimately disrupt and disturb the church's work. Only seeing people and things through God's words is accurate—this is the only way to discern all kinds of people, and the only way to know how to properly treat people and interact with others. Thank God!

43. Crossroads

By Kara, South Korea

I used to have a happy family, and my husband was really good to me. We opened a family restaurant that did pretty well. Our friends and relatives all envied us. But confusingly, I always felt so empty inside. Every day felt exactly the same as the last, like there was no meaning in life, but I had no idea what the right way to live was. Then in late 2010, I had a difficult labor while giving birth and ended up hemorrhaging. The hospital issued a critical condition notice at the time. My mom, really anxious, whispered into my ear, “Honey, pray to Almighty God!” I called on Almighty God in my heart to save me, as though I were clinging to a lifeline. Before long, the bleeding stopped, and I thanked God from the bottom of my heart. I started reading Almighty God’s words every day from then on, and had gatherings and fellowship with brothers and sisters all the time. Over time, I learned that God created man and that everything man has comes from God. We have to have faith, worship God, and do our duty as created beings; only then does life have meaning. So, I took on the duty of preaching the gospel, and every day felt really fulfilling. My family hadn’t accepted the gospel, but they weren’t opposed to my faith.

In late 2012, the Chinese Communist Party started another crazed wave of suppression against The Church of Almighty God, and fabricated all sorts of rumors to frame and smear the church. Lots of radio stations and television stations were disseminating these lies. From that point on, my husband would pull a long face and sulk whenever I came back from a gathering. One day around lunchtime I returned to the restaurant from a gathering, and he grabbed me and dragged me over to the TV, and said, “Look at this God you believe in!” I saw that they were broadcasting all

sorts of Chinese Communist Party's blasphemous words and slanders against The Church of Almighty God that were absolutely baseless and turned the truth on its head. I got really angry, and turned around and said to him, "The news is full of lies. These are just rumors made up by the Communist Party. They hate God and resist Him more than anything, and they've brutally persecuted religious beliefs ever since coming to power. How could you believe anything they say that condemns the church? We've seen plenty after being in business all these years, so it's not like you don't know what this government, what this Party is like. They have fabricated all sorts of unjust, fake, wrongful legal cases, and falsified reports. I won't even talk about the Cultural Revolution, but just in more recent years there was the Tiananmen Square Incident, the brutal suppression of the Tibetan protests, and so on. What they always do is start by making up lies, twisting the truth to make a group look bad and whip up outrage, and then comes a violent crackdown. It's the same with how they treat The Church of Almighty God. This is the Party's usual tactic for eradicating dissent. Besides, brothers and sisters have held gatherings in our home while you were there. You know that we just gather and read God's words, fellowship on the truth, and sing hymns. Are we anything like what the Party is saying?" But my husband was too thoroughly misled by the Communist Party's lies, so he was deaf to what I was saying. He kept berating me, saying I should just live a nice life instead of insisting on believing in God, and that if the government says you can't have faith, then just give it up. My husband said if I kept going to gatherings, he'd smash my electric motorbike so I wouldn't have any way to get there. He even said that he would keep me cooped up at home. It didn't bother me too much at first. I thought my family was just temporarily misled by the Party's lies, and that their anger was out of concern for me, and it would all blow over in a few

days. But things weren't quite that simple. There were more and more lies being broadcast on TV and the internet attacking and defaming The Church of Almighty God, and there were lots of reports of believers being arrested. My family clamped down on me even more when they saw this. Trying to get me to give up my faith, my husband tore up my book of God's words, and broke the MP3 player I used to listen to hymns. He also repeated all of the Communist Party's lies to our neighbors so I couldn't preach the gospel to them. They were misled by the lies, too, and avoided me like I was a leper. My husband's behavior really shocked me. He'd always been so simple and guileless—how could he change so much, so dramatically? After years of marriage, how could he be so devoid of understanding and respect? Time went on, and he was constantly on my case, even blaming everything that went wrong at home on me and my faith. When business slowed down he blamed my faith and wouldn't let me into the restaurant, saying I'd bring bad luck. His parents were always pulling long faces and berating me, and often banging things around in anger. They kept me from going out, and the moment I took a step outside they would call me, demanding to know where I was and who I was with. I was kept under their watch during that time. I couldn't read God's words or contact brothers and sisters. I didn't have any personal freedom whatsoever. This was really trying for me, and I was wondering why having faith was so hard, why it was such a struggle, and when I wouldn't have to live that way anymore. Sometimes I thought I could just stop going to gatherings and doing my duty for the meantime, but I felt that wouldn't be in line with God's intention. In pain, I desperately prayed to God and asked God to guide me. I recalled a passage of God's words: **“Today, most people do not have that knowledge. They believe that suffering is without value, they are renounced by the world, their home life is troubled, they are not**

beloved of God, and their prospects are bleak. The suffering of some people reaches an extreme, and their thoughts turn to death. This is not true love for God; such people are cowards, they have no perseverance, they are weak and powerless! ... Thus, during these last days you must bear testimony to God. No matter how great your suffering, you should walk until the very end, and even at your last breath, still you must be faithful to God and at the mercy of God; only this is truly loving God, and only this is the strong and resounding testimony” (The Word, Vol. 1. The

Appearance and Work of God. Only by Experiencing Painful Trials Can You Know the Loveliness of God). I was really touched as I pondered God’s words. I realized that it wasn’t God’s intention to have us suffer, but to perfect our faith through persecution and hardship so we would have the chance to bear witness for God. I couldn’t yield to Satan because I was afraid of suffering; I had to have faith in God and stay on this path until the end no matter how hard it was.

Later on, because I continued to preach the gospel, my husband became even more oppressive. One day when I got home from a gathering, he really tore into me, yelling, “What are you doing preaching to restaurant guests? Everyone’s talking about you being a believer. How could you humiliate me like this? You’ve seen what they’re saying on TV. If you keep on like this, just wait to be arrested!” I saw he was just getting more and more agitated, so I didn’t say anything in response, but just went inside my room. What I saw there stunned me. He had ripped up my books of God’s words, and the floor was covered with paper. My father-in-law came over just then, and the moment he walked in, he said, “We wanted our son to get married to have a nice life. This family will be ruined if you’re arrested for your faith. Either give up your faith, or get a divorce right away.” Then he started saying blasphemous things. I couldn’t hold my anger back, and I cut

him off, “Since marrying into your family I’ve treated you with nothing but respect. I’ve never been angry or argued with you. If I’ve failed in my duty to this family, you have the right to reprimand me, but there’s nothing wrong with my faith and you shouldn’t stand in my way, much less blaspheme God—” Before I could finish, his expression changed and he shouted, “What’s wrong with having my say about your God? I don’t believe I can’t handle you!” He started pulling on my clothing, trying to drag me off to the police station, but I yanked myself free. Seeing how determined I was and that I wasn’t about to budge, he left in a huff. Right after that I heard a thud, and just as I was turning around, I saw my husband coming at me, and he smacked me right in the face, sending me flying to the ground. I was seeing stars, my ears were ringing, and my face was burning with pain. My mind was entirely blank. It really shocked me that he would do that. We’d been together for nearly ten years and he had never hit me, but he did that day because of my faith. Looking at him, I felt like he was a stranger. As if he’d lost his mind, he forcefully dragged me up off the floor, pressed me up against the wall and said fiercely, “I’m telling you, we’re settling this today. Either you give up your faith, or we’re getting divorced right away. Tell me, are you still going to believe or not? Do you want your faith, or this family?” While talking, he was maniacally banging me against the wall. Seeing that face I knew so well become so demonic, I responded calmly, “I choose my faith.” Enraged, he pushed me onto the bed and wrapped his hands tightly around my neck. I couldn’t breathe, and I wanted to get away, but he was too strong. There was no way I could fight him off. As I struggled to get any air, I became really afraid and thought, “I’m probably going to die this way today.” Just then, my three-year-old son suddenly woke up. He got up and started calling “Mommy! Mommy!” Seeing my husband choking me, he started to hit him and push him, and

then desperately tried to burrow into my arms. Seeing this, my husband let go and said to me viciously, “If it hadn’t been for our son, you would have died at my hands today.” He left, and I thought over what had just happened. My heart was completely chilled. Because the persecution of my faith encroached upon his personal interests, shockingly, he was ready to choke me to death. Isn’t that a devil revealing itself? The more he hit me, the more I saw what kind of person he was, and the more I wanted to follow God until the end.

My mother-in-law came to see me the next day and said right as she walked in, “Could you just stop believing in God? I know that having faith is a good thing, but it means the Party will arrest you and do terrible things to you. What do you say?” I said, “You know how difficult my childbirth was; the hospital issued a critical condition notice. It was Almighty God who saved both me and my son. I have to repay God’s love; I cannot act without a conscience. Almighty God is the one true God who created the heavens and earth and all things, and He’s the Savior who’s come back to save mankind. Disasters are getting bigger and bigger, and only God can save people. Even if we are arrested and suffer for following God, it will only be temporary. That would be better than going to hell with Satan.” She responded, “I understand what you’re saying, but as a woman, you have to think of your child and husband. Your son is so little. Could you really bear to toss him aside just like that?” Hearing her say this, I really felt like crying, but no tears came. I thought, “Is it really me who’s tossing him aside? It’s the Communist Party who’s arresting and persecuting believers. And it’s your son who believes the Party’s lies and is insisting on a divorce and tearing this family apart. How can you blame this on my faith?” But looking at her, with a head full of white hair and a pained look on her face, and thinking about my son being taken away from his mom at such a young

age, I felt more and more miserable. I started to weaken a bit. I silently called out to God, asking Him to guide me. A passage of His words came to mind: **“In every step of work that God does within people, externally it appears to be interactions between people, as if born of human arrangements or from human disturbance. But behind the scenes, every step of work, and everything that happens, is a wager made by Satan before God, and requires people to stand firm in their testimony to God. Take when Job was tried, for example: Behind the scenes, Satan was making a bet with God, and what happened to Job was the deeds of men and the disturbance of men. Behind every step of work that God does in you is Satan’s wager with God—behind it all is a battle. ... When God and Satan do battle in the spiritual realm, how should you satisfy God, and how should you stand firm in your testimony to Him? You should know that everything that happens to you is a great trial and the time when God needs you to bear testimony”** (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. Only Loving God Is Truly Believing in God). I thought about God’s words, and saw that on the surface, everything that was happening to me today looked like it was people standing in my way and persecuting me, but Satan’s tricks were behind it all. Satan was using my family to impede me, to disturb me, using my feelings for my son and family members to threaten me, trying to get me to betray God and lose my chance at salvation. I knew I couldn’t fall for Satan’s tricks; I had to have faith in God, stand firm in my witness, and humiliate Satan. And so, I said to my mother-in-law, “Man was created by God, so we should have faith and worship Him. Besides, my life was given to me by God, so no matter what happens, I will follow Him until the end. Don’t waste your energy trying to convince me otherwise.” She shook her head, then turned around and walked off.

That night my husband found out I was still reading God's words and got really angry. He said, "You still have the nerve to do this? Don't you know that this will get you thrown in jail? Don't you care if you live or die? If you don't care that's fine, but leave me and our child out of it. If I'd known you'd become a believer, I never would have married you in the first place!" Then he shoved me out the front door and said hatefully, "If you keep holding on to your faith, then get out of this house!" Then he slammed the door shut and locked it. Seeing my husband being so heartless and hearing my son scream "Mom" at the top of his lungs, my heart was about to break. It was late, after 2 a.m., and I didn't have any money on me. I wondered at that time if I really was leaving home, and leaving my son for good. I didn't know what to do, and I felt so incredibly forlorn as I thought about it. I realized I had my phone on me, so I called my mom. The moment I heard the sound of her voice, tears poured down my face, and the pain and grievances I'd been stifling for so long all came welling up. Holding back the sound of her own crying, she said, "Honey, calm down. He wouldn't take you this far and then abandon you. Just believe in Him and lean on Him." With my mom comforting and encouraging me, telling me to believe in God and trust Him, the pain in my heart lessened.

The next day, cold and hungry, I was wandering aimlessly through the streets when I happened to bump into a sister. She took me back to her house and read me a couple of passages of God's words, which helped me understand what I was going through. Almighty God says: **"In a dark society such as this, where the demons are merciless and inhumane, how could the king of devils, who kills people without batting an eye, tolerate the existence of a God who is lovely, kind, and also holy? How could it applaud and cheer the arrival of God? These lackeys! They repay kindness with hate, they began treating God as an enemy long**

ago, they abuse God, they are savage in the extreme, they have not the slightest regard for God, they plunder and pillage, they have lost all conscience, they go against all conscience, and they tempt the innocent into senselessness. Forefathers of the ancient? Beloved leaders? They all oppose God! Their meddling has left all beneath heaven in a state of darkness and chaos! Religious freedom? The legitimate rights and interests of citizens? They are all tricks for covering up sin! ... Why put up such an impenetrable obstacle to the work of God? Why employ various tricks to deceive God's folk? Where is the true freedom and the legitimate rights and interests? Where is the fairness? Where is the comfort? Where is the warmth? Why use deceitful schemes to trick God's people? Why use force to suppress the coming of God? Why not allow God to freely roam upon the earth that He created? Why hound God until He has nowhere to rest His head?" (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. Work and Entry (8)). **"God is going to awaken these people, heavily burdened with suffering, to rouse them till they are fully awake, and to make them walk out of the fog and reject the great red dragon. They will wake from their dream, recognize the substance of the great red dragon, become able to give their whole heart to God, rise up from the oppression of the dark forces, stand up in the East of the world, and become proof of God's victory. Only in this way will God gain glory"** (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. Work and Entry (6)). God's words helped me understand that God has become flesh and come to earth in the last days, working and expressing the truth in order to cleanse and save man. The Communist Party is afraid that everyone will accept the truth, follow God, and be saved by Him, then they'll be free from the Party's control and harm. That's why they madly suppress and arrest believers, and create all sorts of lies to condemn and slander The Church of Almighty

God, misleading and inciting the people to deny and resist God along with them. The Communist Party is truly detestable! My family was only treating me this way because they'd been misled by the Communist Party. The Party uses all these lies and fallacies to pull the wool over people's eyes, so that everyone will resist God along with them, and then end up being punished in hell. That was Satan's ruse. At that point it became crystal clear to me that the Communist Party is just a pack of demons that resist God and harm people. I knew I couldn't fall for its tricks, and no matter how my family persecuted me, I could never betray God; I had to keep following Him and doing my duty.

Later on, in order to get me to give up my faith, my husband called some of my relatives and friends from my hometown to ask them to persuade me. They called me and passed the phone around, grilling me one after the other. My older brother said, "You can do anything at such a young age. Why does it have to be believing in God? You're a housewife, so having kids and taking care of the family is your responsibility. Why bother believing in God? If you do, the Communist Party will arrest you and throw you in jail. We're just regular people—how can we possibly fight it?" My aunt took the phone and yelled at me, "Have you lost your mind? A perfectly good home shouldn't be broken up by your faith! Don't you care about your family? You are being incredibly hardheaded!" Another aunt yelled at me, "You haven't been married all that long and your son is still so little. If you end up in prison, what will happen to him? Just take our advice—this is for your own good!" Then my older brother grabbed the phone and added, "If you insist on doing this, your husband will divorce you, and then don't even think about coming back to us. We'll cut off ties with you!" Even my 80-year-old grandma said, crying into the phone, "You can't believe. What if you're arrested? Listen to me. We want the best for you."

After hanging up, I felt really upset. There were so many things I wanted to say to them, like “You say it’s for my own good, but is that really the case? I would have died a long time ago if Almighty God hadn’t saved me, so would I even be here today? Who is really breaking up this perfectly good home? Who is really tearing apart this family? It’s the Communist Party, not me. The Communist Party arrests and persecutes believers, but instead of hating the Party, you stand on their side, persecuting me and trying to get me to betray God, even threatening to cut off all ties and disown me. How can you not know right from wrong? Do you really want the best for me? What kind of family are you? My life was bestowed by God, so what is wrong with me doing my duty to repay God’s love? What is wrong with having faith and taking the right path in life?” For a few days, my family called me and harangued me nonstop. I really was in agony, so I earnestly prayed to God and asked Him to watch over my heart. In the end, I kept going to gatherings and doing my duty.

My husband gave me a divorce agreement he had drawn up himself and said, “If you’re keeping your faith, let’s get a divorce. You won’t be allowed to see our son after we separate. However, if you’re willing to stop believing in Almighty God, I’ll act as if nothing ever happened.” I picked it up and took a look: The husband and the wife had no shared assets, no shared business, and no shared property; the husband would have custody of the son, and the wife would walk away with nothing. But if I didn’t agree to the divorce, he would turn my mom and me into the police, reporting on us as believers in Almighty God. I saw he had planned all of this long before, secretly transferring everything we owned, so when we got a divorce we wouldn’t have any shared assets. Looking at the divorce agreement in my hands, I was thrown into torment once again. If I signed that paper, it would mean leaving this home and not being able to see my

son again. He was so little—I couldn't bear to part with him. I was in utter agony. I called out to God, asking Him to guide me so that I could stand firm. Then, I thought of these passages from God's words: **"While undergoing trials, it is normal for people to be weak, or to have negativity within them, or to lack clarity on God's intentions or their path for practice. But in any case, you must have faith in God's work, and not deny God, just like Job. ... In your experience, no matter what refinement you undergo through God's words, what God requires of mankind, in brief, is their faith and their God-loving heart. What He perfects by working in this way is people's faith, love, and aspirations"**

(The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. Those Who Are to Be Made Perfect Must Undergo Refinement). **"You must suffer hardship for the truth, you must give yourself to the truth, you must endure humiliation for the truth, and to gain more of the truth you must undergo more suffering. This is what you should do. You must not throw away the truth for the sake of a peaceful family life, and you must not lose your life's dignity and integrity for the sake of momentary enjoyment. You should pursue all that is beautiful and good, and you should pursue a path in life that is more meaningful"** (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. The Experiences of Peter: His Knowledge of Chastisement and Judgment). God's words comforted and encouraged me, and they pointed me toward a path of practice. I realized that my husband threatening me with divorce was something that God was allowing to happen. I thought of when Job was being tested. Everything he owned was taken from him by bandits and all his children died overnight. He was sitting in a pile of ashes, covered with boils. Even his wife rejected him, and his friends mocked and judged him. But in the face of all this suffering, he still praised God, saying, "Jehovah gave, and Jehovah has taken away; blessed be the name of Jehovah" (Job 1:21). Only that is true

faith. I had made a solemn vow, and resolutely told God that I would follow Him until the end no matter what. But when faced with my husband's threats, I was stuck in negativity and weakness. That wasn't genuine belief in God. Ever since he'd heard the Party's lies, not only had he ripped up my books of God's words, but he'd been violent with me, nearly choking me to death. Afraid of being implicated because of my faith, he not only wanted to get a divorce, but would leave me penniless and keep me away from my son. He was going to turn me in if I didn't agree. What kind of husband was that? Wasn't he more like a demon? I remembered the words God said: **"Believers and nonbelievers are not compatible; rather, they are opposed to one another"** (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. God and Man Will Enter Into Rest Together). I saw that my husband was threatening me with divorce because he'd listened to the Communist Party and he hated God. So although we were husband and wife, he was following the Party, and was on a path that goes against God and leads straight to hell, whereas I was on the path of following God to gain the truth and eternal life. Believers and nonbelievers are on different paths. I knew I couldn't let him constrain me anymore. The more he persecuted me, the more determined I was to follow God to the end, stand firm in my witness, and shame Satan. So I told him I agreed to the divorce.

On the day we went to the Civil Affairs Bureau to finalize the divorce, I couldn't help but feel some anxiety over being left with nothing. How would I get by after this? Thinking about how incredibly hard I'd worked for the sake of our home and our business over the years, only to end up with nothing, it was really hard to come to terms with. Then I thought of God's words: **"For My sake, are you able to forgo considering, planning, or preparing for your future path of survival?"** (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. A Very Serious Problem: Betrayal (2)). This question from

God really put me to shame. Everyone says that hardship tests sincerity, but when I encountered persecution and adversity, I just thought about my personal interests. Was that true belief in God? Everything about me was in God's hands, so I was determined to submit to His orchestrations and arrangements, and stop worrying about my way out. After we'd signed all the papers, I asked him, "Why were you so determined to get a divorce?" He said, "My cousin told me the government has issued confidential documents saying that believers in Almighty God are high-priority criminals, and that any Party member found to have a believer in their family will be kicked out of the Party immediately, any civil servants will be fired, their children won't get into university, their parents' pensions will be canceled, and their family assets will be confiscated. It used to be that a criminal's family was implicated for nine generations; now, if a person believes in Almighty God, all their relatives will be implicated. I had to let go of you to protect everyone else. Otherwise, my older brother would be kicked out of the Party." I was so angry to hear him say that. God has come to save mankind, which is such a wonderful thing and a blessing for all of humanity. But the Communist Party is madly resisting God and hates God. It's using every despicable means to disrupt and destroy God's work, and it will stop at nothing. They're a pack of murderous, cold-blooded demons! I really saw the true face of the great red dragon and was no longer deceived and fooled by it. I resolved to do my duty well to repay God's love and bring shame to Satan. After that, I left my home and continued doing my duty and preaching the gospel. Thanks be to God!

44. The Consequences of Doing Duty According to One's Own Will

By Xinxin, China

In June 2020, I was selected as a church leader. At first, when I had problems at work I would consciously seek principles, and even when I knew how to do something, I still sought the advice of co-workers and only acted after we reached a consensus. After a while, however, I found that my own suggestions were more appropriate most of the time. Also, since I had been a leader and worker in the past, I felt like I grasped some principles, and could view both people and things, as well as make arrangements in the work more accurately. In particular, once when the gospel work wasn't seeing good results, and my partnered sister didn't know how to resolve it, I proposed that all of the brothers and sisters involved in the gospel work meet up, so we could fellowship on the difficulties in this work and seek the truth for solutions. After some time passed, each brother and sister was able to effectively utilize their strengths in doing their duty, and the effectiveness of the gospel work improved significantly. Unconsciously, I slipped into a state of pride and complacency, feeling that I had work ability and could properly manage both personnel and church work.

A few months later, the church needed to elect a gospel deacon. Before the election, I went through all of the people in the church, and thought Sister Li Yang was most suitable. She had believed for many years, could forsake and expend, and had a sharp mind. She had also been to many places to preach the gospel in the past, with some results. Now, she had only just returned from out of town and had already converted several people, so I thought she was a good fit to be a gospel deacon. But after seeing several evaluations saying she had a very arrogant disposition, often

constrained others, and discouraged people's enthusiasm in doing their duty, I hesitated. But then I thought, "She has good work ability and can preach the gospel effectively, and even if she has these issues, as long as we all help out, it shouldn't be much of a problem." After thinking it over for a while, in the end I still felt that Li Yang was suitable to be a gospel deacon. The next day, I shared my views with my partner. She replied, "Li Yang severely constrains others. It's fine for her to preach the gospel on her own, but I worry she will disturb the gospel work if she becomes a gospel deacon, so we have to be cautious." I wasn't very happy to hear my sister say this. I thought, "You've only believed in God for a short time, so your view is too one-sided. I see people and things more accurately, so it will not be wrong to listen to me." With a look of contempt on my face, I said, "In choosing gospel deacons, the most important thing is whether a person has the work ability and expertise to preach the gospel. Li Yang may be arrogant and have a tendency to constrain others, but she has the ability to work, and she can achieve results in preaching the gospel. We have to learn how to use people according to their strengths and abilities and not get stuck on their small problems." My partner was very resigned after hearing this, so she didn't say anything more.

Next, while fellowshiping with my brothers and sisters about the election, I didn't fellowship on the principles of elections, but instead deliberately stressed that whoever has work ability and is effective in doing their duty should be elected. Influenced by what I fellowshiped, most brothers and sisters voted for Li Yang to be gospel deacon. At the time, I was quite happy. But then, after my superior leader read Li Yang's evaluation, she said Li Yang always constrained others, discouraged others' enthusiasm, was particularly arrogant, and didn't accept the advice of her brothers and sisters, so choosing her as gospel deacon could easily disturb

the work. I thought, “You don’t know the personnel situation of the church. If you’re so strict about things all the time, then we’d never find anyone suitable for the job. Besides, Li Yang isn’t completely against others’ suggestions. The last time I pruned her, she accepted it. She is a decent fit for the role.” Thinking of this, I quickly said, “Li Yang can accept being criticized and pruned, and her preaching of the gospel is effective. We can help her more with her arrogant disposition in the future; she can still handle this position. Besides, right now there’s no one more suitable than her in the church.” After listening, the leader said resignedly, “Then let her practice for a while and we’ll see. If you find that she is attacking people and disturbing the work, then dismiss her immediately.” And so, Li Yang became the gospel deacon.

Not long after, my partner said, “Lately, I have been in contact with Li Yang and found that she still constrains people badly. When gospel workers have shortcomings, she doesn’t help them through fellowship, but instead attacks them, saying they are useless and progress too slowly. She says she does all the work alone and that cooperating with the other brothers and sisters is too tiring, which puts everyone in a negative state.” I didn’t take her words seriously, thinking, “Everyone has corruption. As long as Li Yang can perform her duties effectively, it’s fine. Your experience and insight are still too shallow. I have seen many like her. As long as we often fellowship and prune her, she can still do work.” So I said to my partner, “Let’s look at her strengths more. She is arrogant, but she can preach the gospel. We have to be tolerant of these little faults. I’ll fellowship with her more in the future.” My partner, now refuted by me, had nothing more to say. Later, when I saw Li Yang, I wanted to expose and dissect her problems, but the moment we met, she said the gospel work was now very effective. I saw that she was very proactive in her duty, so I only briefly

mentioned the issue of her arrogant disposition and constraining of others, and fellowshiped with her on how she had to correctly treat her brothers and sisters. After she listened, she said she was willing to change, so I didn't say anything more. Later, several sisters successively reported that not only did Li Yang not do real work, she didn't fellowship on the truth to solve problems when brothers and sisters had difficulties, and she even got angry, scolded and attacked them, putting them in a negative state. As a result, the effectiveness of the gospel work sharply fell. I thought, "Was it really wrong for me to insist on choosing her as a deacon? Since the brothers and sisters have mentioned it many times, I can no longer cling to my views." After that, I gathered everyone's evaluations of Li Yang, and I saw that she often relied on her several years of experience in gospel preaching to scold and attack others from on high, leaving them feeling constrained and in a negative state, unable to perform their duties normally. When others pointed out her problems, she argued and defended herself. Several people gave her fellowship, but she didn't accept it. Reading these evaluations left me dumbfounded. I didn't expect Li Yang's problems to be so serious. After so many years of work, I chose the wrong person to be a deacon, made a mess of the work, and caused complaints among the other brothers and sisters. Realizing all of this was hard for me to take. Afterward, based on Li Yang's consistent behavior, it was determined that she was unsuitable as a gospel deacon, and she was dismissed.

After dismissing Li Yang, I felt something I couldn't explain, like I had been slapped hard in the face. I thought of all the times my partner talked about Li Yang's problems, but I didn't take it seriously, causing serious losses to the church's work as a result. I felt extremely remorseful and guilty, and asked myself, "How could I have made such a big mistake in choosing Li Yang? How should I reflect on these failings, and which

aspect of truth should I enter into?" I prayed to God, asking Him to enlighten me so that I could know myself. I read this passage of God's words: **"Some people never seek the truth while performing their duties. They merely do as they please, acting according to their own imaginings, and are ever arbitrary and rash. They simply do not walk the path of practicing the truth. What does it mean to be 'arbitrary and rash'? It means to act however you see fit when you encounter an issue, without any process of thinking or searching. Nothing anyone else says can touch your heart or change your mind. You can't even accept it when the truth is fellowshiped to you, you stick to your own opinions, not listening when other people say anything right, believing yourself right, and clinging to your own ideas. Even if your thinking is correct, you should take other people's opinions into consideration as well. And if you don't at all, is this not being extremely self-righteous? It is not easy for people who are extremely self-righteous and willful to accept the truth. If you do something wrong and others criticize you, saying, 'You're not doing it according to the truth!' you reply, 'Even if I'm not, this is still how I'm going to do it,' and then you find some reason to make them think this is right. If they reproach you, saying, 'You acting like this is disruptive, and it will damage the work of the church,' not only do you not listen, but you keep coming out with excuses: 'I think this is the right way, so this is how I'm going to do it.' What disposition is this? (Arrogance.) It is arrogance. An arrogant nature makes you willful. If you have an arrogant nature, you will behave arbitrarily and rashly, heedless of what anyone says"** (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. Part Three). God's words precisely exposed my state. I thought, since I had been a leader for many years, mastered some principles, and achieved some results in my work, I felt that I understood the truth and

could see people and things clearly. As a result, I trusted myself. When things happened, I did whatever I wanted, and didn't have any heart of seeking. My partner pointed out that we had to find out if Li Yang had repented and changed, which was completely in line with principles, but I didn't accept it, and insisted on making her listen to me. During the election, I deliberately emphasized my own views to misguide others. After the election, my superior leader reminded me that Li Yang wasn't suitable, but I arrogantly clung to my own views and found reasons to refute the leader. After Li Yang became gospel deacon, she constrained others in all things. When my partner pointed out this problem again, I still didn't reflect on my behavior. I felt she had too little experience and insight, and I didn't take her words seriously. I even said it's normal for those with intelligence and caliber to be a little arrogant. I used this as an excuse to protect Li Yang and condone her actions. I stubbornly clung to my own views. I didn't look at whether she did real work or caused disturbances and disruptions, which led to everyone feeling constrained by her in their duties, seriously hindering the gospel work. I was so arrogant, self-righteous, and reckless. In what way was I doing my duty? I was disrupting and disturbing church work, doing evil and resisting God, which God disgusts and detests. Once I recognized this, I was struck by fear, so I quickly prayed to God to repent, saying I wanted to change my incorrect state and views and seek the principles of selecting people.

In my seeking, I read Principle 63, "The Principles of Electing Leaders and Workers," in 170 Principles of Practicing the Truth. It mentions: "Not all those with arrogant dispositions should be tarred with the same brush. If someone is able to accept the truth and do real work, they may be elected." I saw that people with arrogant dispositions can also be chosen, but there is a prerequisite: They must be able to accept the truth and do real work.

Although Li Yang had some intelligence and caliber and was good at preaching the gospel, her disposition was especially arrogant, and she looked down on others just because she had more gospel experience than they did. When others pointed out her problems, she didn't accept or reflect on herself, and instead tried to argue and justify herself. Even if she outwardly accepted it at times, she didn't change at all afterward. She wasn't someone who accepted the truth. She also tended to use her status to constrain and attack brothers and sisters, causing them to live in a negative state, which seriously affected the gospel work. People like her—those who can't do real work and even disturb and disrupt the work—are unsuitable to be used and can't be chosen as gospel deacons, even if they are talented. In addition, when I chose Li Yang, I had a mistaken point of view. I thought as long as someone had experience and was effective in preaching the gospel, they could be elected as a gospel deacon, but this was entirely my own notion and imagining. That Li Yang could bring in new believers by preaching the gospel only meant she was good at preaching the gospel, not that she was well-suited to supervise the gospel work. No matter how much experience she had, if she had bad humanity, constrained and attacked others from her satanic dispositions, and didn't accept pruning, then it would be troublesome. Using such a person could only disrupt and disturb the work of the church. When things happened to me, I didn't seek the truth. I saw people and things based on my own notions and imaginings. How was this believing in God? As I reflected on this, I felt a sadness deep within my heart. I prayed to God, saying I wished to seek the truth principles, and no longer act arbitrarily on my own will.

Although I had the desire to change, my own will was still too strong, so I made the same old mistakes again not long after. One day, while my upper leader was learning about our work, she saw that Sister Xu Jie, who

was in charge of text-based work, had poor caliber. She had been cultivated for a long time, but showed no obvious growth, and didn't do effective work. My leader suggested I quickly find someone with better caliber and insight to cultivate, and said it didn't matter if their time practicing was short. I thought, "Although Xu Jie doesn't have good caliber, she has done this duty for a long time and can bear a burden, so she's better than anyone new to the job. Those new to it don't grasp the principles and have no work experience, so it would take time to cultivate them. By comparison, Xu Jie is still better for the role. She might just be ineffective lately because she's in a bad state. Once she adjusts herself, her results should naturally improve." So, I didn't reassign Xu Jie. After a while, the leader sent another letter asking me to reassign Xu Jie, and recommending Sister Xin Yu, saying she had good caliber and good writing skills and that she had done the same work in the past, and was worth cultivating. I saw that Xin Yu had only believed in God for a short time, and had little experience, so I doubted if she could really handle the work. With this in mind, I insisted on keeping Xu Jie and did not cultivate Xin Yu. It wasn't until the end of the month that I found out text-based work was almost at a standstill. My leader pruned me, saying I was too insistent on my views, that she suggested reassigning Xu Jie twice, and cultivating Xin Yu, but I hadn't done it, seriously hindering text-based work. Hearing this made me feel terrible. My leader had reminded me twice that Xu Jie had poor caliber and wasn't suitable for cultivating. Why couldn't I accept it? Why did I always insist on using personnel according to my own will? Faced with the huge loss caused to the work, I felt very remorseful, so I prayed to God, asking Him to enlighten and guide me so that I could reflect on my issues.

Later, I read some of God's words: **"You serve God with your natural character, and according to your personal preferences. What's**

more, you always think that the things you are willing to do are what are delightful to God, and that the things you do not wish to do are what are hateful to God; you work entirely according to your own preferences. Can this be called serving God? Ultimately, there will not be the slightest change in your life disposition; instead, your service will make you even more stubborn, thus deeply ingraining your corrupt disposition, and as such, there will be formed within you rules about service to God that are primarily based on your own character, and experiences derived from your service according to your own disposition. These are the experiences and lessons of man. It is man's philosophy for worldly dealings. People like this can be classed as Pharisees and religious officials. If they never wake up and repent, then they will surely turn into the false christs and the antichrists who mislead people in the last days. The false christs and the antichrists that were spoken of will arise from among such people. If those who serve God follow their own character and act according to their own will, they run the risk of being eliminated at any time. Those who apply their many years of experience acquired to serving God in order to win the hearts of others, to lecture them and constrain them, and to stand on high—and who never repent, never confess their sins, never renounce the benefits of position—these people shall fall before God. They are of the same kind as Paul, presuming upon their seniority and flaunting their qualifications. God will not bring people like this to perfection. Such service disrupts the work of God. People always cling to the old. They cling to the notions of the past, to everything from times gone by. This is a great obstacle to their service. If you cannot throw them off, these things will throttle your whole life. God will not commend you, not in the slightest, not even if you break your legs

running or your back with labor, not even if you are martyred in your service of God. Quite the contrary: He will say that you are an evildoer” (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. Religious Service Must Be Purged). **“If someone does not love the truth and frequently acts according to their own will, then they will frequently offend God. He will spurn them, and set them off to the side. What such a person does often fails to meet with God’s approval, and if they know no repentance, then punishment is not far off”** (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. Part Three). As I pondered God’s words, I felt a little afraid. I thought, since I had done my duty for a long time and had some experience, that meant I understood the truth, so I held and practiced my own notions as if they were the truth and treated my work experience as capital. As a result, I became more and more arrogant. When things happened to me, I had no place for God in my heart—I didn’t seek the truth principles, I didn’t accept suggestions from others, and I stubbornly did whatever I wanted. All of this caused losses to the work of the church. I finally understood that having work experience does not mean I understand the truth and possess realities. By not pursuing the truth and acting from my own experience and will, I can only disturb and disrupt the work of the church. The truth rules in God’s house, and the truth is the criterion for people’s actions, but I still mistook my own work experience and will as the truth. How was this belief in God? This was believing in myself! I thought of how the antichrists expelled from the church were all arrogant, conceited, and arbitrary. In their duties, they ignored the principles of God’s house and acted recklessly, and no matter how others reminded or pruned them, they never repented. In the end, they seriously disturbed the work of the church, being expelled and eliminated as a result. Didn’t I have the same disposition as these antichrists? I did! I was also walking the path of an antichrist! I felt

especially regretful and guilty, and hated myself for being so arrogant and self-righteous.

Later, I saw another passage of God's words and learned how to practice. God's words say: **"When other people voice dissenting opinions, how can you practice in order to keep from being arbitrary and rash? You must first have an attitude of humility, set aside what you believe to be right, and let everyone fellowship. Even if you believe your way to be correct, you should not keep insisting on it. That is a kind of step forward; it shows an attitude of seeking the truth, of denying yourself, and of satisfying God's intentions. Once you have this attitude, at the same time as not adhering to your own opinions, you should pray, seek the truth from God, and then look for a basis in God's words—determine how to act based on God's words. This is the most suitable and accurate practice. When you seek the truth and hold up a problem for everyone to fellowship and seek on together, that is when the Holy Spirit provides enlightenment. God enlightens people according to principles, He takes stock of their attitude. If you stubbornly stick to your guns regardless of whether your view is right or wrong, God will hide His face from you and ignore you; He will make you hit a wall to reveal you and expose your ugly state. If, on the other hand, your attitude is correct, neither insistent on your own way, nor self-righteous, nor arbitrary and rash, but an attitude of seeking and of accepting the truth, if you fellowship with everyone, then the Holy Spirit will begin to work among you, and perhaps He will lead you to understanding by means of someone's words. Sometimes, when the Holy Spirit enlightens you, He leads you to understand the crux of a matter with just a few words or phrases, or by giving you an idea. You realize, in that instant, that whatever you have been clinging to is**

erroneous, and, in the same instant, you understand the most appropriate way to act. Having reached such a level, have you not successfully avoided doing evil, and at the same time avoided bearing the consequences of a mistake? Is this not God's protection? (Yes.) How is such a thing achieved? This is only attained when you have a God-fearing heart, and when you seek the truth with a heart of submission. Once you have received the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit and determined the principles of practice, your practice will be in line with the truth, and you will be able to satisfy God's intentions" (The Word, Vol. 3.

The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. Part Three). From God's words, I saw that no matter what happens to us, we must maintain a God-fearing heart, seek God's intention, and seek the truth principles. Especially when our brothers and sisters make suggestions that differ from our own, we should first deny ourselves and accept them. Even if we think we are right, we should let go of ourselves and seek and fellowship with our brothers and sisters. Only in this way can we gain God's guidance and enlightenment. I had believed in God for years, yet even now I couldn't accept suggestions that were in line with the truth. I still lived entirely by my arrogant disposition. Despite being so impoverished, pitiful, filthy, and corrupt, I still proudly thought I was good, and still believed strongly in myself when I acted. Thinking about it, I realized this was shameless. I made up my mind that I would never trust myself again, and that in everything, I would seek the truth principles and fellowship with others more, so that I could do my duty well.

After that, I started to seek how to reasonably arrange duties based on everyone's caliber and strengths. I found these words of God: **"Everyone should fulfill their individual roles and contribute according to their abilities. Arrangements for performing duty should be made appropriately based on individuals' gifts, talents, caliber, age, and the**

length of time they have believed in God. This approach must be tailored to fit different kinds of people, allowing them to perform their duties in God's house and maximize their function" (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. What Is the Adequate Performance of Duty?). **"Some people believe themselves to be skilled in the written word, so they strenuously demand to do a duty that relates to it. Of course, the house of God will not disappoint them, the house of God cherishes talented individuals, and whatever gifts or strengths people have, the house of God will give them room to make use of them, and so the church arranges for them to do text-based work. But after some time passes, it is discovered that they do not in fact possess this skill, and are incapable of doing this duty properly; they are totally ineffective. Their talent and caliber make them utterly incompetent at this job. So what should be done in such circumstances? Is it possible to just put up with them and say, 'You have passion, and although you do not possess much talent, and are of average caliber, as long as you are willing, and not averse to working hard, the house of God will put up with you, and let you carry on doing this duty. It doesn't matter if you don't do it well. The house of God will turn a blind eye, and there's no need for you to be replaced'? Is this the principle by which the house of God handles matters? Obviously not. In such circumstances, suitable duties are normally arranged for them based on their caliber and strengths; that's one side of it. But it's not enough to depend on this alone, because in many cases people themselves don't know what duty they're suited to do, and even if they think they're good at it, that might not necessarily be correct, and so they have to try it out and be trained for a period of time; deciding based on whether they are effective or not is the right thing to do. If they are trained for a period of time, and do not**

get any results or make any progress, and it's confirmed that it's not worth cultivating them, their duty should be adjusted, and a suitable duty should be rearranged for them. Rearranging and adjusting people's duties in this way is the proper thing to do, and is also in line with principle" (The Word, Vol. 4. Exposing Antichrists. Item Twelve: They Want to Withdraw

When They Have No Status or No Hope of Gaining Blessings). In God's words, I saw that the church arranges duties based on each person's humanity, caliber, and strengths, so that each can best play a role in the right place. Some people do text-based work, but after being cultivated for a time, they still experience no growth. They lack the caliber and aren't up to the work, so they can't continue in that role. Instead, an appropriate duty should be arranged for them based on their caliber, which is beneficial both to them and the church's work. According to the principles, although Xu Jie had good humanity and bore a burden in her duty, she had poor caliber, so although she did text-based work for years, progress was too slow, meaning she really wasn't suitable to supervise the work. Although Xin Yu believed for a shorter time than Xu Jie, she understood the truth purely, she was perceptive, she had good caliber, and she enjoyed writing. Although she was not yet qualified for the job, if she was cultivated for some time, she could show progress and become competent. Once I understood the principles of using and cultivating people, I put Xin Yu in charge of the text-based work and reassigned Xu Jie to another duty, and after a period of time, the text-based work gradually improved.

Later, I saw that Sister Wang Chen from another group wrote well, and I felt she could be cultivated for text-based work, so I recommended her. However, my partner said she was arrogant and self-righteous, tended to constrain people, and always made others listen to her, so she was unsuitable to be cultivated. Hearing her say that made me a little unhappy,

and I thought, “While it’s true Wang Chen is a little arrogant and tends to constrain people, that behavior is all in the past. Now, she can accept pruning and has shown some change. I think she is very suitable for text-based work.” So I wanted to cling to my view, but then I thought, “I always selected people based on my own will, which caused losses to the work of the church. Now, I am once again assigning Wang Chen without seeking principles. I made this decision unilaterally. I’m still acting arbitrarily! I can’t cling to my own views anymore. I have to seek the truth in this. The only accurate way to determine this is according to principles.” Later, I read in God’s words: **“Another type of people who can be promoted and cultivated are those who possess special talents or gifts or have mastered some professional skills. What is the standard that the house of God requires for cultivating people like this into team leaders? First look at their humanity—so long as they relatively love positive things and are not evil people, that’s enough. Some people might ask, ‘Why are they not required to be someone who pursues the truth?’ Because team leaders are not church leaders or workers, nor are they waterers, and requiring them to meet the standard of pursuing the truth would be asking too much, and out of reach for most of them. This is not required of people who perform general affairs work or specific items of professional work; if it was, only a few would qualify, so standards have to be lowered. As long as people understand their profession and are capable of shouldering the work, and do not commit evil or cause any disturbance, then that’s enough. For these people, who have expertise in some skills and professions and have some strengths, if they are going to carry out work that requires some familiarity with skill and relates to their professions in the house of God, as long as they are relatively guileless and upstanding in terms of their character, not evil,**

not distorted in their comprehension, able to endure hardship, and willing to pay a price, then that's enough" (The Word, Vol. 5. The Responsibilities of Leaders and Workers. The Responsibilities of Leaders and Workers (5)). God's house cultivates people with special skills based on this principle: They must have acceptable humanity, understanding without distortion, treat their duties seriously, and love positive things. Wang Chen had a somewhat arrogant disposition, but if what others suggested was right and in line with the truth, she could still accept it. She had a talent for text-based work, she could suffer and pay a price in her duty, and she could uphold the work of the church, so she was in line with that principle. Later, I used the principle to fellowship with my superior leader and several partners about my views, and everyone agreed that Wang Chen could be cultivated, so I arranged for her to do text-based work. She cherished the opportunity and produced good results in her new duty. I saw that when we seek God's intention in everything and do our duties according to the truth principles, we will receive the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and our hearts will be at ease and peaceful.

45. Exposing Antichrists Is My Responsibility

By Li Qian, China

In late August of 2020, I was selected as a church leader and partnered with Xin Ran. In early September, our superior called Xin Ran to a gathering out of town while I remained at the church with the several deacons to handle the church's various items of work. At that time, we noticed that the watering work was ineffective, mainly because the watering supervisor was perfunctory and failed to follow up on things in a timely manner. We prepared to fellowship with him to resolve the problem, but when we sent a letter to Xin Ran about it, she rejected our suggestion outright and told us to wait until she returned to discuss it. I thought to myself, "We're just fellowshipping with that supervisor. Why do we have to wait for her to come back to do that? But perhaps Xin Ran knows about some other problems the supervisor has and wants to resolve them all together." After this occurred to me, I kept quiet. But a few days later, Xin Ran returned from the gathering and didn't provide any explanation at all. This made me think that she had some issues: Surely she didn't think that we shouldn't do any work without her? Later, when we discussed the church's work, I noticed that Xin Ran was always speaking down to us and simply giving us orders, as if she didn't see the need to discuss things with us. I made some suggestions, which she dismissed without giving any thought. Some of my suggestions were valid, but she deliberately found fault with them and made us listen to her instead. For example, I had discovered some issues after investigating the work of a few teams, and I suggested that I could fellowship with the supervisors to resolve them, but Xin Ran strongly insisted that I didn't need to. She said that she'd hold a gathering with them when she finished with her other work. I thought that

this would delay things, and that I was more familiar with the state of the work in those teams than she was, so I repeated my thoughts to her again, but she still insisted that I do as she said. That made me feel very uncomfortable, and I thought, “We’re partners, but she always wants to have the final say, and leaves no room for discussion. She rejects all of my suggestions, and I always end up having to listen to her ideas. Are none of my suggestions appropriate? Or is she just too arrogant?” But I saw how aggressive she was, and I thought about how she’d been a leader for longer, which meant that she probably understood the brothers’ and sisters’ problems and difficulties better than me. So I decided to do it her way, and didn’t say anything more.

Later on, the two of us split up to gather with each of the teams. When I gathered with the waterers, the supervisor said that more and more newcomers had been accepting the gospel recently, and they couldn’t keep up with the workload. She asked if church leaders and workers could do some watering part-time to ensure that the newcomers were all watered promptly. I thought that this was a good suggestion, so I adopted it. To my surprise, when Xin Ran found out, she wrote a very harsh letter and sent it to all the waterers the very same day. In the letter, she accused me of having a wrong understanding on this matter, and said that arranging the work this way would mess things up. In between the lines, she also scolded the supervisor, saying, “This is a willful and thoughtless arrangement. You’re acting without regard for anything but your own ideas. It is disrupting and disturbing the work of the church, which is very serious in nature.” Reading this letter felt like a slap in the face. My heart was beating out of my chest. I thought, “I was being willful? I disturbed the church’s work?” I was stunned instantly, and feared that I might have really gone astray and caused disturbance and disruption. When I realized that all the brothers and sisters

could read this letter, I worried what they would think of me. How would I face them again? I was miserable, and it felt like I had been condemned. I thought to myself, “Even if we really made a mistake, she could have just fellowshipped with us on the principles and let us know where we went wrong so we could fix the problem. Why did she directly write a letter to everyone without fellowshipping anything?” I couldn’t help but burst into tears, and I felt very negative about it for a few days. It was only through eating and drinking God’s words that my state improved. At that time, I had a vague feeling that Xin Ran was quite ferocious, and that I had to be careful in my future interactions with her and try not to anger her, otherwise, who could say when she might punish and humiliate me again. The shadow of that incident stayed with me ever since. I always felt that if I didn’t listen to Xin Ran or refuted her, she would do something to harm me, and I secretly harbored a faint fear of her.

Later, I learned that Xin Ran had insisted on gathering with the team supervisors herself, but because she hadn’t arranged the timings well, this was delayed for several days, and a lot of work wasn’t arranged and implemented in time. I thought that she would share the lessons she had learned from this issue, or talk about the deviations and errors she had made in arranging the work, but surprisingly she didn’t mention it. Just a few days later, our superior sent a letter fellowshipping on the relevant principles. She said that it was appropriate for me to arrange for the leaders and workers to water the newcomers part-time. She explained that this way, brothers and sisters could prepare more good deeds and the newcomers could be watered in time, which was beneficial to the church’s work. I thought Xin Ran would reflect on herself and realize her mistake when she heard this, but she seemed completely indifferent to it. She simply glanced at me contemptuously and turned away. I thought, “She has made mistake

after mistake in her duty, yet she doesn't know herself at all. It's dangerous for her to go on like this." I considered reminding her to reflect on herself, but then I saw how high and mighty she was acting and thought about how she had forcefully rejected every suggestion I made to her. Who knew how she'd react to me pointing out her problems? And she had scolded me so harshly last time that I still felt a little afraid and constrained, so I didn't dare remind her.

During that time, all of our work was presided over and arranged by Xin Ran alone. Although the two of us were partners, she never communicated or discussed things with me. She was in charge of everything, and she alone had the final say. When discussing work, the deacons and I would express our views, and then she would nitpick problems with them, reframe our suggestions, and finally propose her own "better ideas." As time went on, we all began to feel that we weren't any good at our duties, and that Xin Ran was more insightful, had work ability, and saw matters more clearly than us. So most of the time, we acquiesced to her point of view and did what she said. Xin Ran was very aggressive when she was finding faults with or outrightly denying my suggestions, which made me always feel a little frightened of her. I thought that she would do something bad to me if I didn't listen to her, so I always found myself trying to accommodate her, and I didn't dare go against her. Because she was always rejecting my suggestions, I gradually stopped wanting to share my ideas during work discussions, even when I felt that they were quite good. I thought that there was no point in voicing them, since Xin Ran would just dismiss them anyway. After that, I became increasingly passive in my duty and I no longer sought how to be more effective. I was just like a puppet. I had no thoughts or views of my own about the various issues in our work. I waited for Xin Ran's orders before doing anything, and just did

whatever she said. The deacons were also in the same condition. During that time, I became more and more negative and passive, but I didn't know how to turn my state around, and felt very tormented.

Later on, we received a letter from our superior saying that some brothers and sisters had been arrested recently. For our safety, we were asked to divide into two groups to do our duties and not to group together. That way if something went wrong, we wouldn't all get arrested at once, which would delay the various items of church work. Xin Ran was away at the time, so I discussed the matter with the deacons. I felt that it was a good plan, but they thought that separating into two groups would make it harder to discuss work. In the end, we couldn't come to a decision, and they wanted to wait until Xin Ran returned to decide. I thought that we'd just be dividing into groups, and it didn't involve any major issues of principle. Considering the safety risks and the pros and cons of this plan, splitting up was the appropriate thing to do. But no one dared to make that decision. They insisted on waiting for Xin Ran to agree to it first. I saw how much everyone relied upon and worshiped her, how they all waited for her to arrange and decide things, and how they listened to her orders, and I realized that the problem with Xin Ran was quite serious. After that, I told one of the deacons, Sister Li Ruizhi, about my state and the issues I had discovered with Xin Ran. I was surprised to hear that she also felt very constrained by Xin Ran. She told me that she had always felt afraid of Xin Ran and didn't dare to go against her. She also said that Xin Ran deliberately exaggerated her shortcomings, and scolded her in front of others to make her look bad. Then Ruizhi added, "If we notice Xin Ran's problems, but don't discern or expose them, and just act like people-pleasers, without holding to the truth principles at all, then we'll end up being loathed by God and forsaken by the Holy Spirit." I felt the same way.

I thought of a passage of God's words that said: **"Those within the church who practice the truth are spurned, unable to give their all, while those who disturb the church and spread death run rampage within—and, what's more, most people follow them. Such churches are ruled by Satan, plain and simple; the devil is their king. If people in such churches do not rise up and reject the head demons, then they, too, will sooner or later come to ruin. From now on, measures must be taken against such churches. If those who are capable of practicing a little of the truth do not seek to, then that church will be expunged. If a church contains no one who is willing to practice the truth and no one who can stand firm in their testimony to God, then that church should be completely isolated, and its connections with other churches must be severed. This is called 'burying death'; this is what it means to spurn Satan"** (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. A Warning to Those Who Do Not Practice the Truth). When I contemplated on this passage of God's words, I felt very afraid. God's words had exposed exactly the state we were in. Xin Ran had the final say and held the power in the church, but no one dared to expose her. Instead we all listened to her, followed her, and allowed her to call all the shots. Where was God's place in my heart? How could this behavior not make God hate and despise me? If I went on like this, I would end up being truly spurned by God, and completely lose the work of the Holy Spirit. I had seen that Xin Ran was violating the principles and acting arbitrarily. She had the final say in everything, she behaved tyrannically, and didn't listen to the advice of her partners and co-workers at all. When others pointed out her problems, she didn't accept it or reflect on herself. But I was so afraid of offending her and being suppressed that I didn't dare bring up her issues. I just obeyed her, which caused delays and disturbed the church's work. This realization made me feel deeply regretful and

remorseful. I thought, “I have to practice the truth and expose her. I can’t resign myself to her anymore.”

But then, something else unexpected happened. One day, after returning from a gathering, Xin Ran said to me angrily, with a sullen face, “There are two team supervisors who can’t work well together and always criticize each other. I’m planning to dismiss them both.” Hearing this shocked me. I knew a little about those supervisors. Although they sometimes showed an arrogant disposition, they could both accept the truth and do real work. They had only revealed a corrupt disposition and failed to cooperate harmoniously; fellowshipping with them on the truth would be enough to resolve those problems. How could they be dismissed just like that? Wouldn’t it delay the church’s work to arbitrarily dismiss people who could do real work? I knew that I couldn’t keep blindly following Xin Ran this time, so I said, “When it comes to such an important matter, we need to seek how to practice properly. We can’t just dismiss people arbitrarily.” After that, I went to investigate the situation of the two supervisors. I was surprised to find out that they had already been dismissed. While looking into the matter further, I discovered that they weren’t candidates for dismissal at all. I was shocked and angry, and I thought, “Xin Ran made such a major decision without discussing it with anyone. That is so outrageous!” So I wrote a letter to Xin Ran, pointing out her problems, but she didn’t know herself at all. Later, I learned that one deacon, Sister Liang Xinjing, who was originally proactive and responsible in her duty, had recently been in a really negative state and felt unfit to be a deacon because Xin Ran often attacked and belittled her. Hearing this made me very upset. I saw that Xin Ran’s arrogance, tyrannical behavior, and the way that she constantly attacked and constrained others did nothing but make people feel negative and miserable. Wasn’t she an evil person? I knew that I had to

expose and stop her—I couldn't let her keep doing whatever she wanted. However, when it came time to actually face her, I still felt a little timid.

Later, I read a passage of God's words: **“If the truth has not become your life, and you still live within your satanic disposition, then when you discover evil people and devils who cause disruptions and disturbances to the work of the church, you will turn a blind eye and a deaf ear; you will brush them aside, without reproach from your conscience. You will even think that anyone causing disturbances to the work of the church has nothing to do with you. No matter how much the work of the church and the interests of the house of God suffer, you don't care, intervene, or feel guilty—which makes you someone who has no conscience or reason, a disbeliever, a laborer. You eat what is of God's, drink what is of God's, and enjoy all that comes from God, yet feel that any harm to the interests of the house of God is not related to you—which makes you a traitor who bites the hand that feeds you. If you do not protect the interests of the house of God, are you even human? This is a demon that has insinuated itself into the church. You feign belief in God, pretend to be a chosen one, and you want to freeload in God's house. You are not living the life of a human being, are more like a fiend than a person, and are clearly one of the disbelievers. If you are someone who truly believes in God, then even if you have yet to gain the truth and life, at the very least you will speak and act from the side of God; at the very least, you will not stand idly by when you see the interests of the house of God being compromised. When you have the urge to turn a blind eye, you will feel guilty, and ill at ease, and will say to yourself, ‘I can't sit here and do nothing, I must stand up and say something, I must take responsibility, I must expose this evil behavior, I must stop it, so that the interests of the house of**

God are not harmed, and the church life is not disturbed.’ If the truth has become your life, then not only will you have this courage and resolve, and will you be capable of understanding the matter completely, but you will also fulfill the responsibility you should bear for God’s work and for the interests of His house, and your duty will thereby be fulfilled” (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. Part Three). God’s words say that if people are indifferent and don’t feel reproach from their conscience when they see the work of the church suffer losses, then they are not living the life of a human being. Reading this cut me deeply, because that was exactly how I was behaving. I could clearly see that Xin Ran had problems, but I was never brave enough to stand up to expose and stop her. Because she always found fault with me, dismissed my ideas, and lectured and attacked me from on high, I feared her and didn’t dare offend her. To protect myself, I resigned myself to her and lived out an ignoble existence. I even thought that as long as I remained her dutiful subject, she wouldn’t suppress or punish me. As long as I could protect myself, I was willing to let her be in charge, command and manipulate me. I lived in this state without any consideration for the church’s work. I knew that Xin Ran had already impacted the church’s work by going against the principles and acting like a tyrant, but I still wasn’t brave enough to stand up and expose her. Even when she attacked and constrained people, held all the power, and called all the shots, I didn’t dare come forward to oppose her and stop her from doing evil. I was truly so servile! I was nothing but a useless coward eking out an ignoble existence! Where was the integrity and dignity in living like that? I enjoyed the watering and supply of God’s words, and everything that came from Him, but I always tried to protect myself and failed to practice the truth to protect the church’s work. When I thought of this, I felt very upset and guilty. I hated myself for being so

selfish and deceitful. I thought, “I can’t go on like this anymore. This time, even if she punishes me and takes revenge, I have to stand up, expose her evil deeds, and safeguard the church’s work. That is my responsibility.”

After that, I went to Xin Ran to expose how she’d violated the principles and acted like a tyrant by arbitrarily dismissing those two supervisors. But I had only just begun speaking when she interrupted me, turning it around on me saying that I hadn’t been cooperating harmoniously with her. At that moment, the deacons also exposed her for suppressing and constraining people. When faced with the facts, Xin Ran was unable to refute us, and she just said that she wasn’t aware of these problems, and that she would do some thinking. Finally, with even a smile on her face, she said, “With my high caliber, I’m liable to be arrogant. It can’t be helped.” I was speechless when I heard that. She truly lacked reason! After that, two of the deacons fellowshiped with and helped Xin Ran twice again, hoping that she could repent, but she didn’t accept it at all, and even attacked them, saying that they were targeting her. When I saw that Xin Ran didn’t accept the truth at all and had no understanding of her own evil deeds, I realized that her problems were truly severe.

Afterward, I thought about how Xin Ran had suppressed the deacons and me to the point that we had become weak and negative. Some of us had even stopped wanting to do our duties. How did this happen? Later, I finally gained some discernment of the methods and nature behind Xin Ran’s actions by reading God’s words. God’s words say: **“Antichrists have motives and goals behind all of the means they use against those who pursue the truth. Rather than seeking to safeguard the work of God’s house, their purpose is to safeguard their own power and status, as well as their position and image in the hearts of God’s chosen people. Their methods and behaviors are disruptions and disturbances to the work of**

God's house, and they also have a destructive effect on church life. Is this not the most common manifestation of an antichrist's evil deeds? In addition to these evil deeds, antichrists do something even more despicable, which is that they always try to figure out how to gain leverage over those who pursue the truth. For example, if some people have fornicated or committed some other transgression, antichrists seize on these as leverage to attack them, look for opportunities to insult, expose, and slander them, label them to discourage their enthusiasm for performing their duties so that they feel negative. Antichrists also cause God's chosen people to discriminate against them, shun them, and reject them, so that those who pursue the truth are isolated. In the end, when all those who pursue the truth feel negative and weak, no longer actively perform their duties, and are unwilling to attend gatherings, the goal of antichrists is achieved. Since those who pursue the truth no longer pose a threat to their status and power, and no one dares to report or expose them anymore, antichrists can feel at ease. ... What do antichrists think that makes them capable of such evil? 'If those who pursue the truth often listen to sermons, they may see through my actions one day, and then they will definitely expose me and replace me. While they perform their duties, my status, prestige, and reputation are under threat. It's better to strike first, find opportunities to seize on leverage to disturb and condemn them, and make them negative, so that they lose any desire to perform their duties. I will also provoke conflicts between the leaders and workers and those who pursue the truth, so that the leaders and workers loathe them, distance themselves from them, and no longer value or promote them. That way, they will no longer have any desire to pursue the truth or perform their duties. It's best if those who pursue the truth remain

negative.’ This is the goal that antichrists wish to achieve” (The Word, Vol. 4. Exposing Antichrists. Item Three: They Exclude and Attack Those Who Pursue the Truth). By reading God’s words, I learned that antichrists have a strong desire for status and that they regard power as life itself. They worry that those who pursue the truth will discern them after understanding the truth, and then gain the support and approval of the brothers and sisters. So, in order to consolidate their position and power, antichrists deliberately seek leverage to attack and belittle those who pursue the truth. They try to make them become negative and lose faith, and not able to do their duties normally. That way, the antichrists can remain in power and always have the final say. I realized that this was exactly what Xin Ran had done. She always found fault with us, seized on our problems and attacked us with her sneers and sarcasm. She also deliberately embarrassed and demeaned us in front of our brothers and sisters, which made us feel that we couldn’t do real work, and left us so weak and negative that we had no desire to do our duties. The public letter she wrote belittling and condemning me for my distorted understanding and willful actions—which were serious in nature—hit me particularly hard. I had been afraid of her ever since. I was terrified that she’d publicly belittle and reprimand me again if I disagreed with her, so I tried my best to go along with her. I didn’t dare to offend her or defy her will again, and I certainly wasn’t brave enough to discern and expose her. She used the same methods on the deacons, attacking everyone until they felt that they were no good at their duties. By doing this, Xin Ran ensured that no one would be able to discern her. It also meant that everyone felt constrained and listened to her, and nobody dared to object to her decisions. That was how she achieved her goal of holding sole power in our church. Xin Ran’s words and actions were very sinister, cunning, and malicious. She spoke and behaved just like an antichrist.

I also pondered on why we had all looked up to and obeyed Xin Ran when she was clearly suppressing us. We didn't even dare make decisions without her there. How did she mislead and control us to such a degree? Later, I read another passage of God's words: **"The most common phenomenon of the antichrist's control is that within their sphere of authority, they alone have the final say. If they are not present, nobody dares to make decisions or settle a matter. Without them, others become like lost children, ignorant of how to pray, seek, or confer with each other, behaving like puppets or dead people. Concerning what antichrists often say to mislead and control people, we won't go into detail here. Surely there are many statements and tactics they employ, and the resulting consequences can be seen played out on those who are misled. ... For example, if you propose a reasonable suggestion, everyone should surround this correct proposal and keep on fellowshipping about it, and this is the right path and demonstrates loyalty and responsibility to their duty, but in their heart an antichrist thinks, 'How come I didn't think of that proposal first?' They admit deep down that the proposal is right, but can they accept it? Due to their nature, they absolutely will not accept your correct suggestion. They will do everything possible to reject your proposal, then come up with an alternative plan to make you feel that your proposal is utterly unworkable, and their plan is better. They want you to feel that you can't do without them and that only with them working can everyone be effective. Without them, no work can be done right, and everyone becomes worthless and can't get anything done. The antichrist's strategy is to always appear novel and unique and make grandiose claims. No matter how correct someone else's statements are, they will reject them. Even though other people's suggestions are consistent with**

their own ideas, if they weren't proposed by them first, they will never acknowledge or adopt them. Instead, they will do everything they can to belittle them, then negate and condemn them, persistently criticizing them until the person offering the suggestions feels that their ideas were wrong and admits their own mistake. Only then will the antichrist finally let it go. Antichrists enjoy establishing themselves while belittling others, aiming to make others worship them and put them at the center. They allow only themselves to shine, while others can only stand in the background. Whatever they say or do is right, and whatever others say or do is wrong. They often put forward novel viewpoints to negate others' viewpoints and actions, finding fault with others' suggestions and disrupting and rejecting others' proposals. This way, other people must listen to them and act according to their plans. They use these methods and strategies to persistently deny you, attack you, and make you feel like you're incompetent, thereby making you increasingly more submissive to them, admiring them more and holding them in higher esteem. That way, you become thoroughly controlled by them. This is the process through which antichrists subdue and control people" (The Word, Vol. 4. Exposing Antichrists. Item Five: They Mislead, Draw In, Threaten, and Control People). After reading God's words, my heart brightened. In the past, when Xin Ran constantly rejected our ideas, I just thought that she was arrogant, but I didn't discern her intentions and goals, or the nature of her actions. I only understood after reading God's words that whenever she dismissed our viewpoints, she was just picking out problems from our viewpoints so she could refute them and make us feel that our suggestions might be unsuitable. She'd then summarize an idea or some high-sounding rhetoric on this basis. After a while, we began to feel that we were inferior to her, and that she saw things more deeply and

insightfully. Not only did we fail to discern her, we increasingly looked up to and admired her, and in the end we couldn't help but deny ourselves. We felt that our ideas and suggestions were basically useless, that it was pointless to mention them, and that we should just listen to her. By doing this, she had achieved her goal of controlling other people's thoughts. After being manipulated by her like this for a long time, we stopped seeking and contemplating when things happened to us, and in the end, we no longer had any thoughts of our own. We were like puppets, and we were completely useless in our duties. I finally understood that this was a method that antichrists employ to dominate and control people. Xin Ran used this as a means to control us, to make us listen to her and obey her. She was so insidious, cunning, and evil!

Later, I read another passage of God's words: **"If someone is smart, if their words and actions are always full of schemes, if they are a formidable character, and when you are with them, they always want to control and take charge of you, do you feel that this person is kindhearted or vicious? (Vicious.) You fear them, and think, 'This person always wants to control me. I have to get away from them as soon as I can. If I don't do what they say, they'll think up a way to get revenge on me, and who knows what methods they'll use to punish me.' You can sense that their disposition is vicious, can't you? (Yes.) How can you sense it? (They always make people do things according to their demands and ideas.) Is it wrong for them to demand that others do things in a certain way? Is it necessarily wrong if other people make demands of you? Is this logic correct? Is this in accordance with the truth? (It is not.) Is it their methods or disposition that makes you feel uncomfortable? (Their disposition.) That's right, their disposition makes you feel uncomfortable. It makes you feel that this disposition comes**

from Satan, that it does not accord with the truth, and that it is disturbing, controlling, and binding you. Not only does it make you feel uncomfortable, but it makes you feel afraid, and it makes you think that if you don't do what they say, there is a possibility that they could punish you. The disposition of this kind of person is so vicious! They don't just casually say something—they want to control you. They make such strong demands of you to do things, and demand that you do them a certain way, and this is laden with a certain type of disposition. They don't merely demand that you do something, they want to control you. If they control you, you will become their puppet, a doll in their hands. If you listen to them completely in whatever you say, whatever you do, and how you do it, then they will be happy. When you sense this disposition, what do you feel in your heart? (I feel afraid.) And when you feel afraid, how do you define this disposition of theirs? Is it responsible, is it kindhearted, or is it vicious? You feel that it is vicious. When you perceive someone's disposition to be vicious, do you feel pleased, or do you feel detestation, aversion, and fear? (Detestation, aversion, and fear.) These bad feelings arise in you. When you feel detestation, aversion, and fear, do you feel liberated and free, or do you feel bound? (Bound.) Where do these kinds of sentiments and feelings come from? **They come from Satan**" (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. Knowing One's Disposition Is the Foundation of Changing It). After reading God's words, I understood why I was so afraid of Xin Ran and didn't dare to defy her. It was mainly because she was so vicious when she scolded me and dismissed my ideas, which made me feel constrained and oppressed. I believed that if I didn't listen to her, she would suppress and punish me. Xin Ran viciously attacked us and found flaws in our ideas so that she could dismiss them—her goal in doing this was to make us compromise, and

eventually turn us into her puppets. She wanted to make everyone listen to her, eliminate all disobedience, and thus achieve her objective of holding complete power. Her desire for control was so strong!

Later, the deacons and I fellowshiped on these words of God together. The more we discussed them, the clearer we felt. We gained some discernment of Xin Ran's methods of misleading, controlling, and suppressing us, and we saw that she had an arrogant and vicious nature. In order to consolidate her status and power, she used these methods to suppress and control others. She held all the power and had the final say among the brothers and sisters. She had already disturbed and caused loss to the church's work by frequently violating the principles and acting arbitrarily. And although she had been exposed and fellowshiped with multiple times, she wouldn't accept this at all, and she lacked knowledge of herself and an attitude of repentance. Based on God's words, we were able to discern with certainty that Xin Ran was the same type of person as an antichrist, which meant that she had to be dismissed and isolated for observation. So, on the very same day, we gave our superior an account of Xin Ran's behavior and our conclusions. After investigating and looking into the situation, our superior discovered that Xin Ran had committed too many evil deeds, and confirmed that she was an antichrist. She consulted the brothers and sisters, and after more than 80% gave their approval, Xin Ran was expelled from the church. After she was expelled, the brothers and sisters were overjoyed, and we all saw that God is so righteous and that the truth rules in God's house. We learned that although antichrists and evil people might run rampant in the church temporarily, in the end they will always be revealed and cleansed away. I also felt deep regret and remorse after all this. I realized that I had been too concerned with protecting myself while an antichrist was doing evil. I would rather be oppressed by her than

seek the truth, discern and expose her. I had tacitly condoned her evildoing and the disruption she caused to the church's work, which meant that I had a share in her evil deeds. Now, I understand that as leaders and workers we must uphold the truth principles and dare to expose antichrists and evil people. That is the only way that we can safeguard the church's work and do our duty well.

46. How the Wise Virgins Welcomed the Lord

By Anick, France

Almighty God says: **“Wherever God appears, there the truth is expressed, and there the voice of God will be. Only those who can accept the truth will be able to hear the voice of God, and only such people are qualified to witness the appearance of God. Let go of your notions! Quiet yourself and give these words a careful reading. If you yearn for the truth, God will enlighten you and you will understand His intentions and His words. Let go of your opinions about the ‘impossible’! The more that people believe something is impossible, the more likely it is to occur, because the wisdom of God soars higher than the heavens, God’s thoughts are higher than man’s thoughts, and the work of God transcends the limits of man’s thinking and notions. The more that something is impossible, the more it has truth that can be sought; the more something lies beyond man’s notions and imagination, the more it contains the intentions of God”** (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. Appendix 1: The Appearance of God Has Ushered in a New Age). Each time God appears to work among humanity, He expresses His words, and only those who let go of their notions and are able to accept the truth will be able to see the appearance of God. Therefore, the key to welcoming the Lord is to take care to listen to God’s voice, and then recognize and welcome the Lord based on that. Those who’ve recognized God’s voice in Almighty God’s words are raptured before God’s throne and attend the Lord’s feast with Him. They are the wise virgins, the most blessed of people. In my previous belief in the Lord, I just clung to the literal words of the Bible and based on my notions and imaginings, I longed for the Lord to come on a cloud and take me into the kingdom of heaven. When I heard the Lord had

returned, I didn't seek and investigate this or listen for God's voice. I almost became a foolish virgin, missing my chance to welcome the Lord's return. Thanks to God's guidance, I heard God's voice and attended the wedding feast of the Lamb.

One day in April 2018, a sister in the Lord sent my good friend Mireille a movie called *Where Is My Home*, saying it was great and really realistic. Mireille came over so we could watch it together. When the main character was in pain and despair, I saw she opened a thick book and found hope for life again in its pages. But it wasn't the Bible she was reading, and its content was all new to us. Surprised, we kept on watching. Later, when the main character was in trouble, her church brothers and sisters came to help her. They read this book together, encouraging and helping each other. I was moved to tears as I watched the plot unfold. The people in the movie were different from all the selfish people in our dark society, and I felt that what they read seemed special. We really wanted to know what was in this book so we read the info below the video. But when I saw that it said the Lord Jesus had already appeared, I just couldn't believe it and thought, "No way! It says in Acts 1:11: 'You men of Galilee, why stand you gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as you have seen Him go into heaven.' The Lord Jesus left on a cloud and when He returns in the last days, He should come again on a cloud with great glory. Now, this hasn't happened, but it says here that the Lord Jesus has appeared. This is at odds with the Bible." I told Mireille what I was thinking and she agreed with me. We didn't look any further into The Church of Almighty God after that, but just watched that movie a few more times.

For some time, the news of the Lord's return kept lingering in my mind and then it came up between Mireille and me again a couple of

months later. We talked about how those words they'd read in the movie gave them such faith and hope, and how they didn't sound like something just anyone could say. In all the religious world, only The Church of Almighty God was testifying to the Lord's return, so maybe things weren't so simple. But then I remembered the Bible clearly stating that the Lord will return on a cloud, and pastors and elders said this, too. So why was this church saying the Lord had returned already? What was it all about? Should we seek and investigate it or not? I felt very conflicted, so Mireille and I prayed together, asking the Lord to guide us to make the right choice. Later, I thought, "God is the Sovereign of all things and has the power to do what He wills. How could we limit His work to our thinking and notions? If Almighty God truly is the Lord Jesus returned and I don't seek or investigate, missing my chance to welcome the Lord, wouldn't I regret it for the rest of my life?" So, we decided to investigate Almighty God's work of the last days. We contacted Sister Anna through The Church of Almighty God's website. She introduced us to Brother Pierre, and together we had a gathering to discuss the topic of the Lord's return.

In that gathering, I told them about my confusion, saying, "Acts 1:11 says the Lord will come the same way He left. Since He left on a white cloud, surely He should come on a white cloud when He returns in the last days. This is what our pastor and elders in the church always say and it's what we believe, too. We haven't seen the Lord coming on a white cloud yet, so how can you say He's returned already?" Brother Pierre said, "The prophecy of the Lord coming on a cloud will surely be fulfilled, but we cannot delimit the way the Lord returns by just looking at that one prophecy. There aren't just prophecies about the Lord coming on a cloud in the Bible, but also some about Him coming in secret. For example, there's Revelation 3:3: **'If therefore you shall not watch, I will come on you as a**

thief, and you shall not know what hour I will come on you.' There's Revelation 16:15: **'Behold, I come as a thief.'** There's Matthew 25:6: **'And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom comes; go you out to meet him.'** And then there's Mark 13:32, that says: **'But of that day and that hour knows no man, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father.'** These prophecies mention the Lord returning **'as a thief'** and **'of that day and that hour knows no man,'** which mean the Lord will come quietly, secretly, with no one being aware of it, and that no one will recognize Him when they see Him. These prophecies mean that the Lord will come in secret. There are many prophecies in the Bible that mention the Lord coming as the Son of man, such as Luke 12:40: **'Be you therefore ready also: for the Son of man comes at an hour when you think not,'** and 17:24–25: **'For as the lightning, that lightens out of the one part under heaven, shines to the other part under heaven; so shall also the Son of man be in His day. But first must He suffer many things, and be rejected of this generation.'** **'The Son of man'** here means born of man, with normal humanity. God's Spirit or spiritual body couldn't be called **'the Son of man.'** Jehovah God is Spirit, so He cannot be called **'the Son of man.'** The Lord Jesus is called **'the Son of man'** and **'Christ'** because He was the Spirit of God in the flesh. So the coming of the Son of man mentioned by the Lord means that God will incarnate as the Son of man when He returns in the last days. In particular, one verse says, **'But first must He suffer many things, and be rejected of this generation.'** This is further proof that the Lord will come in the flesh when He returns. If the Lord didn't come in the flesh, but appeared in His spiritual form, everyone would be so afraid that no one would dare to resist or condemn Him. He wouldn't need to suffer or be rejected by this generation. So God incarnating as the Son of man and

coming in secret is another way the Lord comes in the last days.” At this point, I thought, “This is incredible, really beyond what I’d imagined! But Brother Pierre had backed his fellowship up with evidence, and everything he said completely chimed with the Bible and with the Lord Jesus’ prophecies, which was utterly convincing.” I’d read these verses so many times but never realized that they were about the Lord incarnating in secret. My old ideas were completely countered. Mireille was also nodding thoughtfully, and said, “Yes, what you say is in line with the Lord’s words.” But I was still confused about one thing, so I asked him, “If the Lord incarnates as the Son of man and comes in secret, how is the prophecy of Him coming on a cloud fulfilled? It’s a contradiction, right?” Brother Pierre answered, saying, “There’s no contradiction between these two kinds of prophecies as the Lord’s words can never come to nothing. His prophecies will always be fulfilled. It’s just that they’re gradually fulfilled in line with the steps of God’s work. In the appearance and work of the returned Lord, He first incarnates as the Son of man, appearing to work among humanity in secret, and then He comes on a cloud, appearing openly.” Confused, I asked, “First He comes in secret, and then appears openly? Could you explain this further please, brother?”

Brother Pierre went on, saying, “God first incarnates and comes in secret in the last days to express the truth and do the work of judgment starting with God’s house and to make a group of overcomers before the disasters. Then, God will unleash the disasters and He’ll reward the good and punish the evil. After the disasters, God will come on a cloud and appear openly to all nations and peoples. While God works secretly in the flesh, all true believers who long for Him to appear, hear His voice and turn to Almighty God. These are all the wise virgins; if they are judged and cleansed by God’s words and made into overcomers, they will survive the

disasters. As for those who don't accept Almighty God's work of the last days, and even resist and condemn it, when God comes on a cloud and appears openly, they will see that Almighty God they've resisted and condemned is the returned Lord Jesus, and they'll beat their breasts, weep and gnash their teeth. This will fulfill the prophecies of the Lord coming on a cloud that say: **'And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory'** (Matthew 24:30). **'Behold, He comes with clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him'** (Revelation 1:7)." Brother Pierre then read a passage of Almighty God's words to us: **"Many people may not care what I say, but I still want to tell every so-called saint who follows Jesus that, when you see Jesus descend from the heaven upon a white cloud with your own eyes, this will be the public appearance of the Sun of righteousness. Perhaps that will be a time of great excitement for you, yet you should know that the time when you witness Jesus descend from the heaven is also the time when you go down to hell to be punished. That will be the time of the end of God's management plan and it will be when God rewards the good and punishes the evil. For the judgment of God will have ended before man sees signs, when there is only the expression of truth. Those who accept the truth and do not seek signs, and thus have been purified, shall have returned before the throne of God and entered the Creator's embrace. Only those who persist in the belief that 'The Jesus who does not ride upon a white cloud is a false christ' shall be subjected to everlasting punishment, for they only believe in the Jesus who exhibits signs, but do not acknowledge the Jesus who proclaims severe judgment and releases the**

true way and life. And so it can only be that Jesus deals with them when He openly returns upon a white cloud. ... The return of Jesus is a great salvation for those who are capable of accepting the truth, but for those who are unable to accept the truth it is a sign of condemnation. You should choose your own path, and should not blaspheme against the Holy Spirit and reject the truth. You should not be an ignorant and arrogant person, but someone who submits to the guidance of the Holy Spirit and longs for and seeks the truth; only in this way will you benefit” (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. By the Time You Behold the Spiritual Body of Jesus, God Will Have Made Heaven and Earth Anew). Then I understood. It turned out that when the Lord returns, He first comes in secret and makes a group of overcomers, then He rains down the great disasters, rewarding the good and punishing the wicked. After that, He comes on a cloud with great glory and appears openly to all nations and peoples. There was no contradiction between these two kinds of prophecies at all. I was so blind! The Lord’s coming is such a big deal and I went by my notions and imaginings, clinging to the verses about the Lord coming on a cloud, and not listening to God’s voice. I almost became a foolish virgin and missed my chance to welcome the Lord’s return. That was a close call!

So I asked Brother Pierre, “You testify that the Lord has returned in incarnate form, but what is this ‘incarnation’?” He then read a couple passages of Almighty God’s words: **“The ‘incarnation’ is God’s appearance in the flesh; God works among created mankind in the image of the flesh. So for God to be incarnated, He must first be flesh, flesh with normal humanity; this is the most basic prerequisite. In fact, the implication of God’s incarnation is that God lives and works in the flesh, that God in His very essence becomes flesh, becomes a man”** (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. The Essence of the Flesh Inhabited by God).

“The Christ with normal humanity is a flesh in which the Spirit is realized, and is possessed of normal humanity, normal sense, and human thought. ‘Being realized’ means God becoming man, the Spirit becoming flesh; to put it more plainly, it is when God Himself inhabits a flesh with normal humanity, and through it expresses His divine work—this is what it means to be realized, or incarnated” (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. The Essence of the Flesh Inhabited by God). He continued, saying, “God incarnate is God’s Spirit clothed in flesh, who is God in heaven becoming the Son of man to work and speak among mankind to save us. God incarnate appears totally ordinary, not mighty or extraordinary. He has normal humanity, He comes into actual contact with people, and He lives among us. No one can tell He’s God incarnate. But Christ is the embodiment of God’s Spirit and possesses complete divinity. He can express the truth, do God’s own work, and express God’s disposition and what He has and is. He gives man the truth, the way, and the life, and can cleanse and save corrupt mankind once and for all. No human being has these qualities or can achieve these things. Just like how the incarnate Lord Jesus appeared to be an ordinary person, but in essence He was God’s Spirit realized in flesh. He could express the truth at any time to water and sustain people. He gave people the way of repentance. He could do God’s own work and redeem mankind from sin. God incarnate is therefore unlike any created person, and His essence is that of God Himself.” At this point, I finally understood that the incarnation is God becoming the Son of man who comes to the world to speak and work. This flesh possesses normal humanity and complete divinity. Though He looks ordinary, He can express the truth and do God’s work to save mankind. This is Christ! I’d always said the name “Jesus Christ,” but I’d never really known what Christ was. I was so ignorant!

Brother Pierre then read us another passage of Almighty God's words: **"God's saving of man is not done directly using the method of the Spirit and the identity of the Spirit, for His Spirit can neither be touched nor seen by man, neither can man draw near. If He tried to save man directly using the perspective of the Spirit, man would be unable to receive His salvation. If God did not put on the outward form of a created man, there would be no way for man to receive this salvation. For man has no way of approaching Him, much as no one was able to go near the cloud of Jehovah. Only by becoming a created human being, that is, only by putting His word into the body of flesh that He is about to become, can He personally work the word into all who follow Him. Only then can man personally see and hear His word, and moreover enter into possession of His word, and by this means come to be fully saved. If God did not become flesh, no one of flesh and blood would be able to receive such great salvation, nor would a single person be saved. If the Spirit of God worked directly in the midst of mankind, all humanity would be struck down, or else, with no way of coming into touch with God, they would be completely carried away captive by Satan. The first incarnation was to redeem man from sin, to redeem him by means of the fleshly body of Jesus, that is, He saved man from the cross, but the corrupt satanic disposition still remained within man. The second incarnation is no longer to serve as a sin offering but rather to save fully those who were redeemed from sin. This is done so that those who have been forgiven may be delivered from their sins and made fully clean, and by attaining a changed disposition, break free of Satan's influence of darkness and return before the throne of God. Only in this way can man be fully sanctified"** (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. The Mystery of the Incarnation (4)). He then shared this fellowship:

“Even though the Lord Jesus’ redemption work meant our sins were forgiven, our satanic nature remained intact. We still live by our satanic dispositions, such as arrogance and deceit. We lie and cheat for our own interests, we vie with others for reputation and profit and scheme against each other. We can’t help but sin and resist God. Though we may look like we’re making sacrifices, expending ourselves, and suffering, we’re actually making deals with God, hoping to get the kingdom’s blessings in return. We don’t follow God’s will at all. God is holy, and people as filthy and corrupt as us are simply not fit to enter God’s kingdom. God has incarnated again in the last days to fully save mankind, free us from sin, and cleanse us. He expresses the truth to sustain and shepherd us, and He exposes and judges our corrupt dispositions and satanic nature. He also shows us the path to change our dispositions and tells us how to live out normal humanity and be honest people who delight Him. By experiencing the judgment and chastisement of God’s words, we come to truly know and hate our corruption and satanic nature, and we wish to repent and live by His word. We gradually cast off some corrupt dispositions and begin to live out some human semblance. Only God incarnate can achieve this in His work. If God came to speak and work in His Spirit form in the last days like Jehovah God, He would be unable to cleanse and save man. This is because people can’t see or touch God’s Spirit and they wouldn’t understand Him if He spoke directly to them. What’s more, corrupt mankind can’t go near God’s Spirit, but would be struck down for being filthy and corrupt. It says in the Old Testament that Jehovah God appeared on Mount Sinai with claps of thunder. The Israelites saw the smoke and lightning upon the mountain, and heard the thunder and the sound of horn. They stood far off and said to Moses, ‘Speak you with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die’ (Exodus 20:19). Mankind in the last days has been deeply

corrupted by Satan. If God came to work in the Spirit, no one would survive. We would all be killed by God for being filthy and corrupt. So God has chosen the way that is most beneficial to saving us—He becomes flesh, expresses the truth, and judges and cleanses corrupt mankind. This is God's greatest love and salvation for man!" I felt so touched at this point, and I said excitedly, "We really need God to incarnate as the Son of man to work in the last days. It's the greatest salvation for corrupt mankind! I never knew before the ways in which God worked. I didn't listen out for His voice, and I couldn't recognize or welcome Him according to His voice. I just stupidly waited for the Lord to come on a cloud and take us up into heaven. What a fool I was!"

Later, we read lots of Almighty God's words and discovered what the wise virgins are, what the foolish virgins are, how God appears, and the mysteries of God's names, of His incarnations, and of His judgment work in the last days. We came to understand that God does three stages of work to save mankind, in the Age of Law, the Age of Grace, and the Age of Kingdom. Only these three stages of work can utterly save man from the power of Satan. Jehovah God, the Lord Jesus, and Almighty God are all one God. We confirmed Almighty God as the Lord Jesus returned and accepted Him. We've finally welcomed the Lord! Thanks be to Almighty God!

47. Reflections on Craving Status

By Debra, South Korea

In 2019, I was selected as a church leader. At the time, I was mainly supervising video production. Learning from several team leaders, I gradually mastered some principles of production and developed my own perspective. During discussions, some points I raised would garner everyone's approval. As the videos we produced got better and better, brothers and sisters from other churches would come to learn from us. I felt a great sense of accomplishment, thinking, "Not only can I handle church work, I also understand professional work and can identify problems in video production. If something stumps everyone, they often seek my advice. Overall, I think I'm a qualified leader." Later, the brother I partnered with couldn't handle the work and was dismissed, and Sister Lisa became my new partner to do the church's work. I started making calculations: Lisa gave more insightful fellowship about the truth than me, but I had been working on video production longer and had more experience. She couldn't match my skills and was a bit laid back in her words and actions. Overall, I still had the advantage, and I would mainly guide the way in our work. But as Lisa gradually became more familiar with the church's work, she became more effective in her fellowship and in resolving issues. The brothers and sisters started going to her with all their questions. When I saw that Lisa was diligent and responsible in her work and gave more actual fellowship of God's words than me, I unconsciously began to feel threatened. And especially when I noticed that the team leaders often approved of her ideas, I became even more jealous. If things kept going that way, she would steal the limelight from me sooner or later, and I would become more and more insignificant. That wouldn't do, I

thought. I had to find a way to outdo her. After that, when we discussed work with the team leaders, I'd make sure to be the first to share my ideas.

One time, when we were discussing an issue with a video, I offered my advice, but the others didn't think it was an issue of principle and so they shot down my idea and changed the subject. I felt a bit humiliated. I originally wanted to show that I had a good idea and was insightful, so why couldn't I get my point across? I choked at the most crucial moment. I showed that I wasn't at Lisa's level by outsmarting myself. As Lisa offered her fellowship, I felt like I had completely lost all face, and I became even more jealous. One time, after a discussion, a team leader came to me privately and said, "You seem a bit flustered these days. You've been rushing to get the first word before understanding what's being discussed, and it's been disrupting our thought process. Then we have to explain everything for you again, and that delays our work progress. You need to reflect on this." I was incredibly disheartened to hear this. In the past, most of my ideas were approved in discussions with team leaders. But ever since Lisa arrived, my status among the others had gradually diminished, no one cared about what I had to say and I had even been disrupting church work. If this kept up, how could I even show my face? Not only did I not reflect, I put all the blame on Lisa. For several days, I sulked about it and felt more and more downcast, and I was less and less effective in my work. One time, an upper leader came to tell me that the part of the work I used to supervise would be reassigned to Lisa. I was not happy about it, but I didn't say anything. I thought, "After this reassignment, Lisa clearly will be supervising the majority of the church's work and I'll be an assistant. Will the others think the work was reassigned because I couldn't handle it? I used to preside over and be a part of all the church's work, but now Lisa has stolen all of my limelight. As long as she's here, I'll continue to be

sidelined.” The more I thought about it, the worse I felt. I returned to my room with a heavy heart, and lay down on the bed feeling weak, unable to accept this new reality. Lisa’s caliber and work ability were no better than mine. I had also supervised video work for a long time and had experience, so why was she getting the best of me? I couldn’t be suppressed like that. I had to wrest back my reputation and status no matter what! From then onward, I kept waiting for Lisa to mess up so I could fight my way back in. One time, Lisa didn’t contact me when she went to discuss work with the team leaders, and work was initiated without my knowing. I seized the opportunity to launch a passive-aggressive attack on her arbitrary actions, venting all of my pent-up frustration. I said that I was a mere figurehead and no longer had any say in the team leaders’ work. As I spoke, Lisa became visibly red in the face. Despite using the opportunity to vent my frustrations, I still felt very dark inside. Around that time, our leader arranged a project, but for several reasons, little progress was made on it. In reality, I had plenty of time to help with the project, but I thought, “Lisa is the main supervisor for this project, so even if it is done well, I won’t get any credit for it. I might as well let Lisa do it. It will be even better if she fails—that way people will lose respect for her.” During that time I was constantly vying for reputation and personal gain. I didn’t bear any burden in the church’s work and just went through the motions. I couldn’t resolve issues in the work either, and more and more problems cropped up in my work. Faced with this, I didn’t reflect on myself and just became increasingly exasperated. I would often fixate on others’ faults and blow up on them, disturbing the work. When the upper leader found out, she fellowshiped with me and exposed my issue. But inwardly, I argued, “I’m not the only one responsible for the work failing to get results. Why am I being singled out?” I not only didn’t have any knowledge of myself but

placed all the blame on Lisa. I also blamed the team leaders for not acting on principle. After I failed to accept the leader's repeated fellowship and wasn't doing real work, she dismissed me. After being dismissed, I felt hollowed out inside, anguished and negative. So I prayed to God, asking Him to guide me to learn from this situation.

Later on, I read two passages of God's words that gave me some self-knowledge. Almighty God says: **"What are the mottos of antichrists, no matter what group they are in? Share your thoughts.** (Fighting with other people and with Heaven is a source of endless fun.) **Isn't this mad? This is mad. Are there any others?** (God, don't they think that: 'In all the universe, only I reign supreme'? That is, they want to be the highest, and no matter who they are with, they always want to outdo them.) **This is one of their ideas. Any others?** (God, I thought of four words: 'The winner is king.' I think that they always want to be superior to others and stand out, no matter where they are, and they strive to be the highest.) **Most of what you've spoken about are kinds of ideas; try using a sort of behavior to describe them. Antichrists do not necessarily want to occupy the highest position no matter where they are. Whenever they go to a place, they have a disposition and a mentality compelling them to act. What is this mentality? It is 'I must compete! Compete! Compete!' Why three 'competes,' why not a single 'compete'?** (Competition has become their life, it is what they live by.) **This is their disposition. They were born with a disposition that is wildly arrogant and difficult to contain, that is, seeing themselves as second to none, and being extremely egotistical. No one can curtail this incredibly arrogant disposition of theirs; they themselves cannot control it either. So their life is all about fighting and competing. What do they fight and compete for? Naturally, they compete for fame, gain, status, face, and their own interests. No matter**

what methods they have to use, so long as everyone submits to them, and so long as they obtain benefits and status for themselves, they have achieved their goal. Their will to compete is not a temporary amusement; it is a kind of disposition that comes from a satanic nature. It is like the disposition of the great red dragon that fights with Heaven, fights with the earth, and fights with people. Now, when antichrists fight and compete with others in the church, what do they want? Without a doubt, they are competing for reputation and status. But if they gain status, what use is it to them? What good is it to them if others listen to, admire, and worship them? Antichrists themselves cannot even explain this. In reality, they like to enjoy reputation and status, to have everyone smile at them, and to be greeted with flattering and fawning. So, every time an antichrist goes to a church, they do one thing: fight and compete with others. Even if they win power and status, they are not done. To protect their status and secure their power, they continue to fight and compete with others. They will do this until they die. So, the philosophy of antichrists is, 'As long as you are alive, do not stop fighting.' If an evil person like this exists within the church, will it disturb the brothers and sisters? For example, say that everyone is quietly eating and drinking the words of God and fellowshiping on the truth, and the atmosphere is peaceful and the mood pleasant. At this time, an antichrist will simmer with dissatisfaction. They will become jealous of those fellowshiping on the truth and hate them. They will begin to attack and make judgments of them. Will this not disturb the peaceful atmosphere? They are an evil person who has come to disturb and disgust others. That is what antichrists are like. Sometimes, antichrists are not seeking to destroy or defeat those that they compete with and suppress; as long as they attain reputation,

status, pride, and face, and make people admire them, they have achieved their goal” (The Word, Vol. 4. Exposing Antichrists. Item Nine (Part Three)).

“The more you struggle, the darker your heart will become, and the more envy and hatred you will feel, and your desire to obtain these things will only grow stronger. The stronger your desire to obtain them, the less you will be able to obtain them, and as this happens, your hatred will increase. As your hatred increases, you will grow darker inside. The darker you are inside, the worse your performance of your duty will become, and the worse your performance of your duty becomes, the less useful you will be to the house of God. This is an interlinked, vicious cycle. If you never perform your duty well, you will gradually be eliminated” (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days.

Freedom and Liberation Can Be Gained Only by Casting Off One’s Corrupt Disposition).

Thinking over God’s words, I recalled all my behaviors of vying for reputation and gain. What I revealed was just like the antichrist disposition that God has exposed. Ever since I saw that Lisa was getting better results than me and had gained the brothers’ and sisters’ respect, a silent urge simmered within me to prove that she wasn’t better than me, so I couldn’t lose to her. All I could think about was how to turn the tables on her. When discussing work, I’d cut in to express my views, just wanting to distinguish myself and outshine Lisa, without giving the slightest thought to whether this would impact our work. And when the upper leader reassigned some of my work to Lisa, I became even more jealous, thinking that she’d stolen the limelight from me. Then, my malicious intention began to surface—I started looking for opportunities to seize on Lisa’s deviations and oversights and vent my inner frustrations, merely to achieve my goals, no matter how much harm I brought to her. When a certain project wasn’t progressing, despite clearly seeing where the problems lay and having time to help, I

didn't feel like bothering with them, knowing that Lisa was supervising. I even hoped that she'd fail and lose face. I saw that I had too much desire for reputation and status, was being unkind, and wasn't protecting the church's work at all. I was vying for reputation and gain, always trying to outdo others, and not putting any thought into my duty. The work I supervised had virtually ground to a halt and I'd descended into darkness. This "vying" had got me caught up in a vicious cycle. Just as God says: **"If you never perform your duty well, you will gradually be eliminated."** I plunged the church's work into chaos and didn't even think to reflect on myself. If I continued on like that, who knows what disruptive behavior I might be capable of. At worst, I might even be eliminated. Thankfully, I was dismissed before I stooped to committing evil. This was God giving me a chance to self-reflect and know myself, and pruning my desire for reputation and status. I realized that this was God's salvation and His way of protecting me. I gave thanks to God and my state greatly improved. I made a personal resolution to fulfill my duty in a down-to-earth manner and stop vying for reputation and gain.

After that, I was much more low-key in my duty. Even when I was assigned general affairs work and had to do some unremarkable, odd jobs, I was willing to submit, knowing that since God gave me this chance to repent, I should do my duty in a down-to-earth manner. Soon after, a new video project was launched and to my surprise, everyone selected me to produce it. I cherished the opportunity and diligently researched and sought relevant principles. After some time, the basic structure of the video started coming together, and, seeing how it came out, I was feeling quite pleased with myself. My desire for name and status flared up again. I thought, "I might have been dismissed as leader, but a talented person's day always comes. I've got to seize this opportunity to put my strengths to play and

prove my talent. Lisa might be better than me at fellowshipping the truth and resolving issues, but I have the upper hand when it comes to professional skills. As long as I put in the time and produce this video well, everyone will see my improvement and I might be selected as leader again and outdo Lisa.” One day, I heard that the overall work progress was going slowly, and Lisa had been pruned by the leader due to videos violating principles. Hearing this, I felt a bit of schadenfreude, thinking, “You see, video production work hasn’t improved since I was dismissed. It’s worse than before. Before, I could spot problems and provide ideas, so it’s better if they don’t make any progress. They can see that it wasn’t just me not doing my job well, but Lisa as well.” Later, I heard that Lisa had been in a bad state recently—her fellowship at gatherings lacked any light, and the others were wracked with issues and had become negative. I thought to myself, “If this keeps up, maybe a serious issue will come up in the video work and Lisa will be dismissed. Maybe then I’ll be selected as the leader and can continue supervising this work.” So I kept working on the video, while also keeping close tabs on Lisa’s situation. When I heard that Lisa had learned from being pruned, her state had improved, the brothers and sisters had grasped certain principles through failure and setbacks and were getting better results, I felt a bit disappointed and depressed. Especially when in a gathering, Lisa fellowshipped on what she’d gained and experienced through all this, and got everyone’s approval, I became even more displeased. Jealous and hateful thoughts welled up in me. I felt like there was no hope for my comeback. After that, I couldn’t get motivated and became absent-minded while producing the video. A few days later, the video was done. But to my surprise, my leader noticed a big problem with it during her review. She then assigned someone else to edit it and didn’t let me continue to produce the video or assign me any more duties. I was

completely taken off guard. Losing this chance to produce the video, the one thing I could show off had been taken away. While all the other brothers and sisters were busy with their duties, I had nothing to do, and stuck out like a sore thumb. I felt truly awful—I was lonely, despondent and agonized, and wracked by suffering. I tearfully prayed to God, “Dear God, I know it is through Your righteousness that I’m faced with this situation. After being dismissed, I didn’t truly self-reflect and know myself, instead just looking for ways to make a comeback and distinguish myself. I’ve been malicious and arrogant and have made You disgusted. Now I can’t do any duty and have become a freeloader in the church. Oh God, I don’t want to vie for reputation and gain anymore. Please enlighten me and allow me to gain true knowledge of myself so that I can hate and rebel against myself and stop going back to my old ways.”

After that, I came across another passage of God’s words: **“Antichrists consider their own status and reputation as more important than anything else. These people are not only deceitful, cunning, and wicked, but also extremely vicious. What do they do when they detect that their status is at risk, or when they lose their place in people’s hearts, when they lose these people’s endorsement and affection, when people no longer venerate and look up to them, and they have fallen into ignominy? They suddenly change. As soon as they lose their status, they become unwilling to perform any duty, everything they do is perfunctory, and they have no interest in doing anything. But this isn’t the worst manifestation. What is the worst manifestation? As soon as these people lose their status, and no one looks up to them, and no one is misled by them, out comes the hate, jealousy, and revenge. They not only have no God-fearing hearts, but also lack any shred of submission. In their hearts, furthermore, they are liable to hate God’s house, the**

church, and the leaders and workers; they long for the work of the church to run into problems or come to a standstill; they want to laugh at the church, and at the brothers and sisters. They also hate anyone who pursues the truth and fears God. They attack and mock anyone who is loyal in their duty and willing to pay a price. This is the disposition of the antichrists—and is it not vicious? These are clearly evil people; antichrists are in their essence evil people. Even when gatherings are held online, if they see that the signal is good, they quietly curse and say to themselves: ‘I hope the signal drops! I hope the signal drops! It is better if no one can hear the sermons!’ What are these people? (Devils.) They are devils! They are definitely not the people of God’s house” (The Word, Vol. 4. Exposing Antichrists. Item Nine (Part Two)).

God exposes how an antichrist’s nature is vicious. As soon as they lose their status and others’ support, not only do they start going through the motions in their duties, they also become hateful, jealous and vindictive, longing for problems to arise in the church’s work so that they can laugh in spite at God’s house and the others. I saw that my own behaviors were just like what God exposed. When I heard that issues arose in the work Lisa was supervising and she was pruned, I secretly rejoiced, and couldn’t wait for a serious problem to arise that would get Lisa dismissed so that I could replace her. When I heard that Lisa’s state had improved, the others had learned something, and the church’s work had made a favorable turn, I became unhappy. I was just revealing the disposition of an antichrist! Only antichrists, devils and Satan hate God and the truth, hoping that church work will grind to a halt, everyone will become negative, abandon their duties, lose God’s salvation, and ultimately descend into hell with them. Despite being a member of the church who had received so much of the watering and sustenance of God’s words, I sought reputation and status

instead of the truth, disrupted the church's work and failed to repent. And because my lust for status hadn't been satisfied, I hoped issues would arise in church work so Lisa wouldn't look better than me. These were malicious and despicable thoughts. The people of God's house should be of one heart with God. Seeing more people pursue the truth, do their duties well and consider God's intention, they feel happy. When the church's work is impeded, they take a stand to maintain the work. But when I saw issues arise in video production and the others become negative, I didn't help them resolve their issues and even had a laugh at them in spite. When their states improved and video production work started picking up, I actually felt unhappy. My thoughts were truly malicious. I wasn't protecting the church's work at all and was not worthy of being part of God's house. How shameless was I to think I should be made leader!

Later, I read another passage of God's words that helped me understand my satanic disposition. Almighty God says: **"Let no person think of themselves as perfect, distinguished, noble, or distinct from others; all this is brought about by man's arrogant disposition and ignorance. Always thinking of oneself as set apart—this is caused by an arrogant disposition; never being able to accept their shortcomings, and never being able to confront their mistakes and failures—this is caused by an arrogant disposition; never permitting others to be higher than themselves, or to be better than themselves—this is caused by an arrogant disposition; never allowing others' strengths to surpass or exceed their own—this is caused by an arrogant disposition; never permitting others to have better thoughts, suggestions, and views than themselves, and, when they discover that others are better than themselves, becoming negative, not wishing to speak, feeling distressed and dejected, and becoming upset—all of this is caused by an arrogant**

disposition. An arrogant disposition can make you protective of your reputation, unable to accept others' corrections, unable to confront your shortcomings, and unable to accept your own failures and mistakes. More than that, when someone is better than you, it can cause hatred and jealousy to emerge in your heart, and you can feel constrained, such that you do not wish to do your duty and become perfunctory in performing it. An arrogant disposition can cause these behaviors and practices to emerge in you" (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of

Christ of the Last Days. The Principles That Should Guide One's Conduct). I reflected on myself in light of God's words: The reason I was always feeling capable and trying to compete with Lisa was that I was very arrogant, lacked reason, and didn't know what I was really made of. All along, I had believed I had professional knowledge and had abundant experience. I was proud of this and felt I was stronger than Lisa in these areas. I thought these qualifications would be enough to do the work well, so when Lisa got better results than me in her duty, and the upper leader reassigned some of my duties to her, I became unconvinced, thinking she wasn't any better than me. I even wanted to make a comeback after being dismissed. Thinking back, I saw that I was just a little bit more familiar with and experienced in the work, and could provide advice on video production, but that didn't mean I was cut out to be a leader. A leader's core job is to guide others in eating and drinking God's words and entering into the truth reality, and resolve all problems that crop up in the church to ensure the normal flow of church work. But I didn't do the real work that a leader should do at all. When the team leaders were disagreeing, often argued and no one would back down, I didn't know how to fellowship the truth to resolve the issue and help them cooperate harmoniously. Also, when some brothers and sisters became negative and passive in their duties and needed fellowship

on God's words to support them, my experience was lacking, my fellowship lacked depth, and I didn't resolve their issues. I wasn't up to par in all aspects of church work. Lisa may have had some deficiencies in her professional skills, but she could resolve some difficulties that arose in church work. The upper leader reassigned some work to her for the sake of the church, but I was too arrogant and didn't have a good sense of my capabilities. I was clearly no match for Lisa, but I still thought I was and wouldn't back down, always competing. I was just so unreasonably arrogant! After that, I read this passage of God's words: **"God loathes nothing more than when people pursue status, because the pursuit of status is a satanic disposition, it is a wrong path, it is born of the corruption of Satan, it is something condemned by God, and it is the very thing that God judges and purifies. God loathes nothing more than when people pursue status, and yet you still mulishly compete for status, you unfailingly cherish and protect it, always trying to take it for yourself. And in nature, is all of this not antagonistic to God? Status is not ordained for people by God; God provides people with the truth, the way, and the life, and ultimately makes them become an acceptable created being, a small and insignificant created being—not someone who has status and prestige and is revered by thousands of people. And so, no matter what perspective it is viewed from, the pursuit of status is a dead end. No matter how reasonable your excuse for pursuing status is, this path is still the wrong one, and is not approved of by God. No matter how hard you try or how great the price you pay, if you desire status, God will not give it to you; if it's not given by God, you will fail in fighting to obtain it, and if you keep fighting there will only be one outcome: You will be revealed and eliminated, and you will meet with a dead end"** (The Word, Vol. 4. Exposing Antichrists. Item Nine (Part Three)). After reading

this, I felt horrified by my actions, especially after reading the section that said: **“If you desire status, God will not give it to you; if it’s not given by God, you will fail in fighting to obtain it, and if you keep fighting there will only be one outcome: You will be revealed and eliminated, and you will meet with a dead end.”** Through God’s words, I saw how God’s righteous disposition is unoffendable. The church had given me the opportunity to do this duty, so that I would pursue the truth in my duty and ultimately become a qualified created being. But instead, I continually vied for status. Wasn’t I intentionally going against God’s demands? God loathes nothing more than this. Despite having been responsible for video work for a long time, I only had a theoretical foundation in the technical aspects of the work, and I wasn’t very proficient in them, so when I was actually asked to make a video, I couldn’t do it well. When we got good results in our videos while I was leader, that was all due to the Holy Spirit’s guidance and the efforts of our team, not my contributions. But I wore these achievements like a crown on my head and wouldn’t let others steal my glory, relentlessly vying for reputation and plunging the church work into chaos. Everything I did was evil and against God, and disgusting to Him. Just then, I recalled a sister who I’d been partnered with a year ago. She had a strong desire for status and reputation, and clung to her power. She would suppress and lash out against anyone that threatened her status, and even sabotaged the church’s work without batting an eye to protect her status. In turn, she was revealed as an antichrist for all her evildoing and was expelled. As for me, I clearly wasn’t doing real work, but still wanted to compete, which disrupted and disturbed church work. If I didn’t repent but kept on like that, I would likely be eliminated by God. Realizing this, I prayed to God, “Oh God, the church gave me the opportunity to train as a leader, but I didn’t attend to my duties and walk the right path, instead vying for name and gain. My

thoughts and actions have all been evil, and if I'm punished, it will be completely deserved. Dear God, I don't want to live so despicably anymore. I'm ready to repent and start afresh."

Several days later, my leader sent me a message, saying that I had been assigned to play a part in a hymn video and asking me to learn the hymn first. I was so excited when I saw the message. I thanked God from the bottom of my heart for giving me another chance. The hymn I was to learn was called **"God's Pity on Mankind."** I read these words of God in the hymn: **"Although the city of Nineveh was filled with people just as corrupt, wicked and violent as those of Sodom, their repentance caused God to have a change of heart and decide not to destroy them. Because the way they treated God's words and instructions demonstrated an attitude that starkly contrasted with that of the citizens of Sodom, and because of their honest submission to God and honest repentance for their sins, as well as their true and heartfelt behavior in all regards, God once more expressed His own heartfelt pity and bestowed it upon them. What God bestows upon humanity and His pity for humanity are impossible for anyone to duplicate, and it is impossible for any person to possess God's mercy, His tolerance, or His sincere feelings toward humanity"** (The Word, Vol. 2. On Knowing God. God Himself, the Unique II). Through God's words, I saw His intention to save mankind. God became enraged and would destroy the people of Nineveh due to their corruption and evil, but when the Ninevites sincerely repented to God, He calmed His wrath and didn't destroy them. Through this, I realized that God values people's sincere repentance. Despite how I disrupted and disturbed the church work and transgressed, God didn't eliminate me. He used my dismissal and pruning to compel me to reflect. This was all God's salvation! I couldn't continue living in regret and negativity. I had to repent to God, seek the

truth and resolve my corrupt disposition to avoid doing any more evil and resisting God.

One time, during my devotional, I read a passage of God's words that gave me a path of practice. Almighty God says: **"Letting go of reputation and status isn't easy—it depends on people pursuing the truth. Only by understanding the truth can one come to know oneself, see clearly the emptiness of seeking fame, gain and status, and see clearly the truth of mankind's corruption. Only when a person truly comes to know themselves can they abandon status and reputation. It's not easy to cast off one's corrupt disposition. If you have recognized that you lack the truth, are beset with deficiencies, and reveal too much corruption, yet you put no effort into pursuing the truth, and you disguise yourself and engage in hypocrisy, leading people to believe that you can do anything, then this will put you in danger—and sooner or later, there will come a time when you will hit a roadblock and fall. You must admit that you don't have the truth, and be brave enough to face reality. You have weaknesses, reveal corruption, and are beset with all manner of inadequacies. This is normal, because you're a regular person, you're not superhuman or omnipotent, and you must recognize that. ... When you have the constant thought and desire to compete for status, then you must realize what bad things this kind of state will lead to if left unsolved. So waste no time in searching for the truth, overcome your desire to compete for status while it is in the nascent stage, and replace it with practicing the truth. When you practice the truth, your desire and ambition to compete for status will be diminished, and you will not disturb the work of the church. In this way, your actions will be remembered and approved of by God"** (The Word, Vol. 4. Exposing Antichrists. Item Nine (Part Three)). Through God's words, I saw that to truly put aside my

desire for reputation and status, I must first have self-knowledge, be able to actively lay bare and admit my faults and let others see my true situation. When the desire to compete comes back up, I must consciously pray to God, rebel against myself and cooperate with others. Only then can I do my duty well. I realized that I didn't focus on reflection and self-knowledge. I became extremely jealous and wouldn't actively share my state, and didn't seek the truth for resolution. As a result, I lived in a state of fighting for name and gain, causing disturbances to the church life. I had to act according to God's words going forward. After that, I consciously opened up about my state in my duty, and actively sought to learn from those that I partnered with. After a period of time, I noticed that the brothers and sisters had certain strengths that I myself lacked. I felt even more ashamed of my arrogance and ignorance. I thought back on how I'd been competitive and vied for reputation, causing losses to the church's work, and felt even more regretful. I quietly prayed to God, "Oh God, through being revealed and dismissed, I've gained some slight awareness. In the past, I vied for reputation and gain without protecting the church's interests. Not only did I disturb church work, I also harmed my brothers and sisters. I'm really not worthy of being called human! Going forward, I'm willing to practice according to Your words, learn from others' strengths, and harmoniously partner with others in my duty."

Later, some problems cropped up in a new video project, and the upper leader assigned me and Lisa to resolve them together. This time around, I didn't compete with Lisa in our partnership. Instead, I actively discussed with and sought advice from her when problems arose, only moving forward once we were in agreement. Sometimes, when Lisa's fellowship was clearer and more insightful than mine, I'd unconsciously try to prove myself. But I'd immediately realize I was competing again and would pray

to God and rebel against myself, accept Lisa's suggestions, and diligently ponder and seek on them. I realized that Lisa's ideas really were better than mine and was able to accept them wholeheartedly. I felt really peaceful and at ease practicing in this way. God's words taught me how to partner well and live out a semblance of humanity.

48. Reflection on Repaying Kindnesses

By Nathan, South Korea

In 2022, I received a letter from my hometown church asking for an evaluation of one of the sisters, Zhang Hua. The letter said she was disrupting church life, pitting people against each other and gathering her own supporters. The leaders tried fellowshiping several times to no avail, and she fought back by pointing out the leaders' own faults. The church was preparing information needed to expel Zhang Hua and asked me to write an evaluation of her. When I saw the letter, I realized that Zhang Hua was likely to be expelled this time because she had been persistent in such behavior all along, and still hadn't changed. This was a very serious condition. When I imagined Zhang Hua's expulsion, I didn't feel so good about it. She'd promoted me before, and always tried to look after me. If she knew I had exposed her evil doings, what would she think of me? Would she say I was ungrateful and heartless? Thinking on it, I just wanted to avoid the matter. I happened to have other work to do, and put it off for a few days.

The issue kept hanging over my head—I remembered something from ten years before. Back then, Zhang Hua was the church leader and had promoted me to text-based work, so that I could get more practice. Later, I was promoted repeatedly, and went to do my duty out of town. I'd thought that being able to continue with text-based work had something to do with her promoting me all those years before. I thought of the fellowship, help and support that she provided during her years as leader—we got along very easily, and she took good care of us in our daily lives. Not only did she arrange better houses to receive us, but if we were short on clothes or daily necessities she would also have them brought to us immediately. I

remember one time she held a gathering for us. When hearing I had liver disease, she contacted a brother who practiced medicine, getting me a dozen bottles of liver meds for free. I was very touched by that. Except for my family, no one had ever shown such concern for my disease. I always felt that she had appreciated and valued me and I was forever grateful for that. So it was almost unbearably awkward to then be asked to write an evaluation of Zhang Hua, for I knew she had a list of evil deeds—if they were exposed, they’d result in her expulsion. For example, in her duty as leader she was derelict and reckless, severely damaging the church’s work. After being dismissed as leader, she went to preach the gospel but began following antichrists, denouncing the leaders as false leaders in her struggle for leadership. As a result, leaders and workers couldn’t do their duty, and church work was severely disturbed. Her sister was an evil person, and when she was expelled, Zhang Hua wasn’t pleased and came to her defense, spreading notions. And so on. I couldn’t help but wonder why Zhang Hua always supported the wrong people. Then I thought of God’s word: **“Many in the church have no discernment. When something misleading occurs, they unexpectedly stand on the side of Satan; they even take offense at being called Satan’s lackeys. Though people might say they have no discernment, they always stand on the side without truth, they never stand on the side of the truth at the critical time, they never stand up and argue for the truth. Do they truly lack discernment? Why do they unexpectedly take the side of Satan? Why do they never say one word that is fair and reasonable in support of the truth? Has this situation genuinely arisen as a result of their momentary confusion? The less discernment people have, the less able they are to stand on the side of truth. What does this show? Does it not show that people without discernment love sin? Does it not show that they are the loyal**

spawn of Satan? Why is it that they are always able to stand on the side of Satan and speak its language? Their every word and deed, the expressions on their faces, are all sufficient to prove that they are not any kind of lovers of the truth; rather, they are people who detest the truth. That they can stand on the side of Satan is enough to prove that Satan really loves these petty devils who spend their lives fighting for Satan's sake. Are all these facts not abundantly clear?" (The Word, Vol. 1.

The Appearance and Work of God. A Warning to Those Who Do Not Practice the Truth).

Through the revelation of God's word, and comparing it to Zhang Hua's past evil deeds and her present behavior, I saw she was always taking Satan's side, disturbing the church's work. I understood that she was in fact Satan's lackey—an evil person disrupting and disturbing the church's work. If I were to expose all of Zhang Hua's evil deeds and behavior, then according to the church's principles, she would certainly be cleared out. Then, she'd have no role to play in the house of God and no chance of salvation. She was already middle-aged, and hadn't started a family. If she were expelled, would she have anywhere to go? When I thought of the care and promotion she'd given me, I was in a dilemma. If I exposed her, she'd likely be expelled for her poor behavior. If I didn't, I wouldn't be protecting the church's work or being loyal to God. Thinking on it, I came up with a compromise. Years had passed, and my memory wasn't so great. I'd already forgotten many details, so there was no use putting much effort into recalling them. I'd just jot down a few obvious ones and call it a day. When this thought occurred to me, I felt some reproach in my heart. Wasn't this just deceit and trickery? Now is the final stage of revelation in God's work, when people are sorted according to their kind. Only when evil people, antichrists, disbelievers and evil spirits are cleared out will the church be cleansed and able to carry out its work smoothly. I knew very well Zhang

Hua was evil, but didn't want to expose her—I wanted to shelter her, to cover up for her. This would be standing on Satan's side and resisting God. Realizing this, I became frightened. I tried hard to recall all of her actions and wrote them up for the leader.

After sending it, I felt a little more at ease, but a feeling of sadness still remained. If I returned to my hometown one day and Zhang Hua knew I was the one who exposed her evil deeds, would she say that I was without affection, and that I was ungrateful? For days, when I thought about this, I felt like I had done something wrong. I kept pondering: I knew that exposing and reporting evil people is in line with God's intention and is the duty of all God's chosen, so why was I so sad, and unwilling to expose her? Why did I feel like I owed her something? Reflecting, I recalled that when God dissected various sayings about moral conduct He touched on the topic of repaying kindnesses, so I began reading God's word. God's words say: **“The idea that a kindness received should be gratefully repaid is one of the classic criteria in Chinese traditional culture for judging whether a person's conduct is moral or immoral. When evaluating whether someone's humanity is good or bad, and how moral their conduct is, one of the benchmarks is whether they return the favors or help that they receive—whether or not they are someone who gratefully repays the kindness they receive. Within Chinese traditional culture, and within the traditional culture of mankind, people treat this as an important measure of moral conduct. If someone does not understand that a kindness received should be gratefully repaid, and they are ungrateful, then they are considered to be devoid of conscience and unworthy of associating with, and should be despised, spurned or rejected by all. On the other hand, if someone does understand that a kindness received should be gratefully repaid—if they are grateful and**

return the favors and help they receive with every means at their disposal—they are deemed a person of conscience and humanity. If somebody receives benefits or help from another person, but does not repay them, or just expresses a little gratitude to them with a simple ‘thank you’ and nothing more, what will the other person think? Might they feel uneasy about it? Might they think, ‘That guy doesn’t deserve to be helped, he’s not a good person. If that’s how he responds when I’ve helped him so much, then he has no conscience or humanity, and isn’t worth associating with’? If they ran into this kind of person again, would they still help them? They wouldn’t wish to, at least. Wouldn’t you, in similar circumstances, wonder whether you really ought to help or not? The lesson you would have learned from your previous experience would be, ‘I can’t help just anybody out—they have to understand that a kindness received should be gratefully repaid. If they’re the ungrateful type who won’t repay me for the help I’ve given them, then I’m better off not helping.’ Wouldn’t that be your view on the matter? (Yes.)” (The Word, Vol. 6. On the Pursuit of the Truth I. What It Means to Pursue the Truth (7)). After reading God’s word, I’d found the reason why I felt so sad, and felt like I owed something to her. I had been misled and poisoned by the saying of repaying kindnesses. From childhood to adulthood, when my parents, elders, or the villagers were talking, the phrase “repaying kindnesses” frequently appeared in their conversations. When they heard how someone who had received help later repaid the favor, they’d praise this person and say they were good, with a conscience, and worth befriending. They admired and respected such people, and would greet them happily when they saw them. But when someone hadn’t returned a favor, they didn’t want to associate with them. They privately labeled such people as ungrateful, lacking conscience and humanity, and didn’t greet

them at all. Steeped in my childhood environment, I always tried to practice the idea of repaying kindnesses. I had to remember everyone who'd helped me or my family, and repay them as soon as possible. If it wasn't possible right then, I had to wait and repay them later, when I could. This seemed like the way a noble, conscionable, upright person should act, and it won me the favor of those around me. But as for Zhang Hua, I felt that I hadn't repaid all her promotion, concern, and help, and I had even called out her evil deeds. I had a guilty conscience and felt ungrateful. These ideas still had such a grip on me that even though I knew evil people and disbelievers can only disrupt the church's work and the brothers' and sisters' duties, I was still unwilling to expose her evil deeds. I was greatly misled and restrained by the concept of repaying kindnesses.

Just then, I read more of God's word which said: **“Statements on moral conduct like ‘A kindness received should be gratefully repaid’ do not tell people exactly what their responsibilities are within society and among mankind. Instead, they are a way of binding or forcing people to act and think in a certain way, regardless of whether they want to or not, and no matter the circumstances or context in which these acts of kindness befall them. There are plenty of examples from ancient China of kindness being repaid. For example, a starving beggar boy got taken in by a family who fed him, clothed him, trained him in martial arts, and taught him all kinds of knowledge. They waited until he had grown up, and then started using him as a source of income, sending him out to do evil, to kill people, to do things that he didn't want to do. If you look at his story in light of all the favors he received, then him being saved was a good thing. But if you consider what he was forced to do later, was it really good or bad? (It was bad.) But under the conditioning of traditional culture like ‘A kindness received should be gratefully**

repaid,' people cannot make this distinction. On the surface, it appears that the boy had no choice but to do evil things and hurt people, to become a killer—things that most people would not wish to do. But didn't the fact that he did these bad things and killed at the behest of his master come, deep down, from a desire to repay him for his kindness? Particularly due to the conditioning of Chinese traditional culture such as 'A kindness received should be gratefully repaid,' people can't help but be influenced and controlled by these ideas. The way that they act, and the intentions and motivations behind these actions are certainly constrained by them. When the boy was put in that situation, what would his first thought have been? 'I was saved by this family, and they have been good to me. I can't be ungrateful, I must repay their kindness. I owe my life to them, so I must devote it to them. I should do whatever they ask of me, even if that means doing evil and killing people. I cannot consider whether it is right or wrong, I must simply repay their kindness. Would I still be worthy of being called human if I didn't?' As a result, whenever the family wanted him to murder someone or do something bad, he did it without any hesitation or reservations. So weren't his conduct, actions, and unquestioning obedience all dictated by the idea and view that 'A kindness received should be gratefully repaid'? Wasn't he fulfilling that criterion of moral conduct? (Yes.) What do you see from this example? Is the saying 'A kindness received should be gratefully repaid' a good thing, or not? (It's not, there is no principle to it.) Actually, a person who repays a kindness does have a principle. Namely, that a kindness received should be gratefully repaid. If someone does you a kindness, you must do one in return. If you fail to do so, then you are not human and there is nothing that you can say if

you are condemned for it. The saying goes: ‘The kindness of a drop of water should be repaid with a gushing spring,’ but in this case, the boy received not a small act of kindness but a life-saving kindness, so he had all the more reason to repay it with a life in return. He did not know what the limits or principles of repaying kindness were. He believed that his life had been given to him by that family, so he had to devote it to them in return, and do whatever they demanded of him, including murder or other acts of evil. This way of repaying kindness has no principles or limits. He served as an accomplice to evildoers and ruined himself in the process. Was it right for him to repay kindness in this way? Of course not. It was a foolish way of doing things” (The Word, Vol. 6. On the Pursuit of the Truth I. What It Means to Pursue the Truth (7)). Through God’s example of the beggar repaying a kindness, I saw that the traditional culture of repaying kindnesses is a satanic fallacy meant to poison us. The idea of repaying kindnesses not only constrains our soul, but also distorts our thoughts, turning ordinary help between people into a debt of gratitude that must be kept in mind and repaid, lest one be labeled as lacking a conscience and humanity. How many people have lost touch with proper conduct because of this misleading and poisonous traditional culture! No matter who does the favor, even if it’s an evil person or someone with ulterior motives, whoever receives the benefit must then repay it with all of their being, even to the extent of murder, and other evil. And so I realized that the fallacy of repaying kindnesses does indeed poison people. When I thought of Zhang Hua attacking the leaders and workers and disrupting the church’s work, I knew the leader’s goal in asking for an evaluation was to clearly understand how Zhang Hua usually behaved so as to judge whether or not to expel her. But under the misleading and influence of “repaying kindnesses,” the mere thought of Zhang Hua promoting and caring for me

—all her favors—made me want to cover up her evil deeds. I was too confused to tell the difference between good and evil, black and white! At this point, I was able to discern some things about the idea of repaying kindnesses. I could see it was not a positive thing, but a fallacy Satan uses to mislead and corrupt people. I knew I shouldn't live by this, shouldn't take it as a principle of conduct.

Later, I read more in God's word that said: **"The traditional cultural concept that 'A kindness received should be gratefully repaid' needs to be discerned. The most important part is the word 'kindness'—how should you view this kindness? What aspect and nature of kindness is it referring to? What is the significance of 'A kindness received should be gratefully repaid'? People must figure out the answers to these questions and under no circumstances be constrained by this idea of repaying kindness—for anyone who pursues the truth, this is absolutely essential. What is 'kindness' according to human notions? On a smaller level, kindness is someone helping you out when you are in trouble. For example, somebody giving you a bowl of rice when you are starving, or a bottle of water when you're dying of thirst, or helping you up when you fall down and can't get up. These are all acts of kindness. A great act of kindness is someone rescuing you when you're in desperate straits—that is a life-saving kindness. When you are in mortal danger and someone helps you to avoid death, they are essentially saving your life. These are some of the things that people perceive as 'kindness.' This sort of kindness far surpasses any petty, material favor—it is a great kindness that cannot be measured in terms of money or material things. Those who receive it feel a kind of gratitude that is impossible to express with just a few words of thanks. Is it accurate, though, for people to measure kindness in this way? (It is**

not.) **Why do you say that it is not accurate?** (Because this measurement is based on the standards of traditional culture.) **This is an answer based in theory and doctrine, and while it may seem right, it does not get to the essence of the matter. So, how can one explain this in practical terms? Think about it carefully. A while ago, I heard about a video online in which a man drops his wallet without realizing it. The wallet gets picked up by a small dog who chases after him, and when the man sees this, he beats the dog for stealing his wallet. Absurd, isn't it? The man has less morals than the dog! The dog's actions were in complete accordance with human standards of morality. A human would have called out 'You dropped your wallet!' But because the dog couldn't speak, it just silently picked up the wallet and trotted after the man. So, if a dog can carry out some of the good behaviors encouraged by traditional culture, what does that say about humans? Humans are born with conscience and reason, so they're all the more capable of doing these things. As long as someone has the sense of their conscience, they can fulfill these kinds of responsibilities and obligations. It is not necessary to put in hard work or pay a price, it requires little effort and is simply a matter of doing something helpful, something of benefit to others. But does the nature of this act really qualify as 'kindness'? Does it rise to the level of an act of kindness? (It doesn't.) Since it does not, do people need to talk of repaying it? That would be unnecessary"** (The Word, Vol. 6. On the Pursuit of the Truth I. What It Means to Pursue the Truth (7)). As I pondered His word, my heart was enlightened. God says: **"The most important part is the word 'kindness'—how should you view this kindness?"** As soon as I could figure out how to view "kindness," I would see the truth and no longer be misled or constrained by it. So I mulled it over. I believed Zhang Hua had shown kindness to me in

two main ways. Firstly, she promoted me. Second, she had a brother provide me with medicine while she was leader. Now, were these actually kindnesses? Actually, when someone is sick or faces some difficulty, lending a helping hand to provide some relief is normal behavior—it's a responsibility, and common sense. Anyone who has a conscience and reason can achieve that, and it hardly constitutes a special kindness that must be repaid. But I took her help to heart and labeled it as special kindness that must be repaid, even trying to keep her in the church by covering up her evil deeds. By repaying her kindness in this way, wasn't I sacrificing the church's interests for my own? I was utterly confused! I also wondered if Zhang Hua promoting me counted as a special kindness. I thought of this in God's words: **"You have to understand that no matter what time or what stage God is doing His work, He always needs a portion of people to work with Him. That these people cooperate with God's work or cooperate in spreading the gospel is predestined by Him. ... Which of you is performing your duty in God's house right now by accident? Whatever background you came from to perform your duty, none of it was by chance. This duty can't be performed by just finding a few believers at random; this was something predestined by God before the ages. What does it mean for something to be predestined? What specifically? It means that in His entire management plan, God long ago planned how many times you would be on earth, which lineage and which family you would be born into during the last days, what the circumstances of this family would be, whether you would be male or female, what your strengths would be, what level of education you would have, how articulate you would be, what your caliber would be, and what you would look like. He planned the age that you would come to God's house and begin performing your duty and what duty you**

would perform at what time. God predestined each step for you early on. When you weren't yet born and when you came to earth in your last several lives, God had already arranged for you what duty you would be performing in this final stage of work" (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. Part Three). The more I pondered God's words, the clearer things became. My text-based work has seemed due to Zhang Hua's promotion, but in reality, God is the One organizing everything. It was He who led me gradually into this role. If the house of God hadn't possessed this job, I couldn't have performed this duty. So hadn't this all happened as a result of the work of God? It's God I should have been thankful and grateful toward, and yet I had considered Zhang Hua as the source of this favor, and wanted to repay her for it. I couldn't see the grace of God, only the kindness of man. I was truly blind, ignorant, unreasonable and foolish. Zhang Hua's duty as church leader was to train and promote people according to the work requirements of God's house—I should have thanked God, rather than assign this kindness to another person. Once I understood this, I felt relief. The gratitude I'd felt to her for over ten years, the thankfulness I'd felt for her appreciation of me, and my desire to repay her all disappeared. I no longer felt indebted to her or sorry for exposing her evil deeds. The guilt for being ungrateful disappeared as well and there was no more question of any kindness between us. Just as God says: **"For Me, this kind of 'kindness' simply does not exist, and I hope the same is true for you. How should you regard it, then? Simply regard it as an obligation and a responsibility, and something that a person with human instincts should do. You should treat it as your responsibility and obligation as a human being, and do it to the best of your ability. That is all"** (The Word, Vol. 6. On the Pursuit of the Truth I. What It Means to Pursue the Truth (7)). God's word freed me from the bondage of the idea of repaying

kindnesses and corrected my perspective on these matters. I am very thankful to Him.

So anyway, I thought the matter was finished. But not long after, my hometown church wrote me again, asking me to write down clearly Zhang Hua's behavior, as well as the times and places it took place, when she had stood up for antichrists and evil people, and had followed antichrists to do evil. Without such evidence, it would be impossible to expel her. After receiving the letter, I was still a little uneasy. If I wrote this, Zhang Hua would certainly be expelled. She'd been so good to me, and if I did this, wouldn't I ... But I quickly realized that the satanic principle of repaying kindnesses was at work here. I had to ignore this idea and practice according to God's word. I remembered that God's word says: **"By what principle do God's words ask that people treat others? Love what God loves, and hate what God hates: This is the principle that should be adhered to. God loves those who pursue the truth and are able to follow His will; these are also the people that we should love. Those who are not able to follow God's will, who hate and rebel against God—these people are detested by God, and we should detest them, too. This is what God asks of man. ... During the Age of Grace, the Lord Jesus said, 'Who is My mother? And who are My brothers?' 'For whoever shall follow the will of My Father which is in heaven, the same is My brother, and sister, and mother.' These words already existed back in the Age of Grace, and now God's words are even more clear: 'Love what God loves, and hate what God hates.' These words cut straight to the point, yet people are often unable to grasp their true meaning"** (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. Only by Recognizing One's Own Misguided Views Can One Truly Transform). God's word makes it very clear: We should treat people with principle, love what God loves and hate what God

hates. Those who pursue and practice the truth are our brothers and sisters and should be treated with love. Those who don't pursue the truth or practice it at all, or even commit evil that disrupts the church's work are not brothers and sisters but Satan's lackeys, evil people. They need to be exposed, discerned, and cleansed away from the church. Only this accords with God's intention. I did not hesitate after understanding this. With the documents I had provided earlier and with careful recollection, I drew up an account of her evil deeds. After sending back my reply, I felt peaceful and at ease. I had finally escaped the constraints of the concept of repaying kindnesses and my heart felt relief.

49. Why Is It So Hard to Admit Mistakes?

By Martha, Italy

I'm responsible for video work at my church. One day, one of my sisters called me up in a hurry. She hadn't checked a video properly and it needed to be reworked, which had caused delays and cost us manpower and resources. When I heard the name of the video, I realized that I had also helped check the video but hadn't seen any problems either. After the call, I hurried to find out what this was all about, and saw that the name of the video had been spelled wrong. Of course, mistakes at work should be reported to the leader, or highlighted for everyone to avoid similar problems in the future. But then I hesitated: "I've made such a basic mistake. How will the leader see me afterward? Will he think that I am not serious or reliable in my duty? If so, then I'll lose my position as the person in charge." Then, I thought about how I always stressed the importance of attentiveness in making videos to my brothers and sisters. If everyone knew that I'd made this mistake, would they think I wasn't fit to be in charge? Then how would my reputation fare? So I didn't want to tell others about my mistake. I found excuses for myself, "We weren't being deliberately perfunctory. We checked what we should've checked. I couldn't have predicted these special circumstances. The damage done cannot be undone, but as long as I'm more careful in the future, it'll be fine. Besides, I'm not the only one who checked this video. Even if everyone finds out what happened, I'm not the only one to blame. This matter can end here. All the relevant people know, and that's enough." So, I didn't tell the leader or the other brothers and sisters in the group. Even though I felt uneasy and knew I was avoiding responsibility, when I thought about what admitting this

mistake might do to my reputation, and even my position, I just carried on stubbornly as though nothing had happened.

One day, I read this in God's words: **"Corrupt human beings are good at disguising themselves. No matter what they do or what corruption they reveal, they always have to disguise themselves. If something goes wrong or they do something wrong, they want to put the blame on others. They want credit for good things to go to themselves, and blame for bad things to go to others. Is there not a lot of disguising like this in real life? There is too much. Making mistakes or disguising oneself: which of these relates to disposition? Disguising is a matter of disposition, it involves an arrogant disposition, wickedness, and deceitfulness; it is especially loathed by God. In fact, when you disguise yourself, everyone understands what is happening, but you think others do not see it, and you try your best to argue and justify yourself in an effort to save face and make everyone think you did nothing wrong. Is this not stupid? What do others think about this? How do they feel? Sick and loathing. If, having made a mistake, you can treat it correctly, and can allow everyone else to talk about it, permitting their commentary and discernment about it, and you can open up about it and dissect it, what will everyone's opinion of you be? They will say you are an honest person, for your heart is open to God. Through your actions and behavior, they will be able to see your heart. But if you try to disguise yourself and deceive everyone, people will think little of you, and say you are a fool and an unwise person. If you do not try to put on a pretense or justify yourself, if you can admit your mistakes, everyone will say you are honest and wise. And what makes you wise? Everyone makes mistakes. Everyone has faults and flaws. And actually, everyone has the same corrupt disposition. Do not think**

yourself more noble, perfect, and kind than others; that is being utterly unreasonable. Once people's corrupt dispositions and the essence and true face of their corruption are clear to you, you will not try to cover up your own mistakes, nor will you hold other people's mistakes against them—you will be able to face both correctly. Only then will you become insightful and not do foolish things, which will make you wise. Those who are not wise are foolish people, and they always dwell on their minor mistakes while sneaking around behind the scenes. It is disgusting to witness. In fact, what you are doing is immediately obvious to other people, yet you are still blatantly putting on a show. To others, it has the appearance of a clownish performance. Is this not foolish? It really is" (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. The Principles That Should Guide One's Conduct). From God's words, I realized that pretending, covering up and failing to admit one's mistake are much more serious than simply making a mistake. They are deceitful, and treacherous! Conversely, when someone lays themselves bare and takes responsibility for a mistake, not only will others not look down on them, but they'll respect that person for speaking the truth simply and openly. We all have times when we make mistakes. God does not casually condemn people for their errors—He sees if they can genuinely repent afterward. But I hadn't grasped this. I thought it was shameful to make mistakes, especially as a supervisor—I thought that if I made basic mistakes, people would look down on me. They'd think I was no better than my brothers and sisters, and I might be replaced. So when an error was found in a video I'd checked, I didn't dare own up to it and persisted in covering it up. I acted like nothing had happened in order to avoid responsibility, and sweep the matter under the rug. I felt guilty about it, but I still wasn't willing to tell everyone the truth. I was so deceitful! I had obviously brought loss to the work of the

church, but I didn't say a word, and tried to cover up my error. I let the leader and my brothers and sisters see only my good side, not my mistake. That way, everyone would think I was serious and down-to-earth in my work. I could maintain my image, and my position as a supervisor. It was such a despicable way for me to act! I was afraid of people finding out about my mistake, so I did everything I could to disguise myself. I covered up my ugly side, deceived people, and hid the truth from them. I was living without character or dignity. I couldn't go on covering up my mistake and deceiving others. So, I wrote to my leader, informing him of the situation, and I opened up to everyone about my corruption. I told them the truth, so that they could learn from my example. After doing this, I felt a little more at ease.

Later, when I opened our work list, I found out that another video might have been made twice. I couldn't believe it was real. I kept track of who I assigned to each task, so how could there be another mistake? But when I checked, the video had indeed been made twice. At the time, I was paralyzed: This was bad. I'd just admitted my mistake to the leader, and before he could even understand the situation in detail, I'd messed up again. What would he think of me? Would he think that I was always getting things wrong, and wasn't fit to be in charge? And if the other brothers and sisters found out, would they think I was too unreliable and kept making these basic mistakes? Then if next time I fellowshipped about being serious and responsible in our duties, would they still take it seriously? No, I had to find out exactly what the reason was for this mistake, and hoped that I was not the main person responsible. Even if I shared part of the blame, it had to be a smaller part. That way, I wouldn't lose face, and my status would be safe. In the end, after careful inspection, I discovered that after I'd assigned the task, I only recorded it on an older worklist, which caused the group

leader to not know about it and to assign the task to someone else. There was no doubt—I was mainly responsible. When I realized this, I was petrified. How could I have been so unlucky? I'd run into all these problems that shouldn't have happened. What bad luck! I was completely at a loss. Should I tell the leader about this mistake, or not? If everyone knew that I'd made two of these basic mistakes in a row, what would they think of me then? I really didn't want to tell the truth to the leader. However, I thought of God's words which talked about how disguise and deceit are much more serious than mistakes, and God detests them even more. In my heart, I was afraid. I had to bite the bullet and tell the leader about this mistake, but I couldn't let go of my fears. I was filled with apprehension. My heart felt heavy, as though it was weighed down by a stone. I felt distracted when I did my duty, and I couldn't sleep at night. I knew that this state wasn't right, so I prayed to God, asking for Him to enlighten and guide me to know myself.

Later, I read a passage of God's words and gained an understanding of my state. Almighty God says: **"No matter how many wrong things an antichrist does, no matter what kind of wrong things they do, whether it be embezzling, squandering, or misusing God's offerings, or if they are disrupting and disturbing the work of the church, making a huge mess of it and provoking God's wrath, they always remain calm, collected, and totally unconcerned. No matter what kind of evil an antichrist does or what consequences it brings about, they never promptly come before God to confess their sins and repent, or come before the brothers and sisters with an attitude of baring themselves and opening up to admit their wrongdoings, know their transgressions and corruption, and regret their evil deeds. Instead, they rack their brains to find various excuses to shirk responsibility and shift the**

blame onto others to restore their own face and status. What they care about is not the work of the church, but whether their reputation and status are damaged or impacted in any way. They do not consider at all or think of ways to make up for the losses caused to God's house due to their transgressions, nor do they try to make up for their debt to God. That is to say, they never admit that they are capable of doing something wrong or that they have made a mistake. In the hearts of antichrists, proactively admitting mistakes and providing an honest account of the facts is incompetence and foolishness. If their evil deeds are discovered and exposed, antichrists will only admit to a momentary careless mistake, never their own dereliction of duty and irresponsibility, and they will attempt to pin the responsibility on someone else to remove the stain from their record. At times like these, antichrists are not concerned with how to make up for the losses caused to God's house, how to open up, admit their mistakes, or give an account of this to God's chosen people. They are concerned with finding ways to make major problems seem like small ones and small problems seem unproblematic. They give objective reasons to make others understand and sympathize with them. They try their utmost to restore their reputations in other people's minds, minimize the extremely negative influence of their transgressions on themselves, not let the Above have a bad impression of them, and ensure that the Above never holds them accountable, dismisses them, investigates the situation, or handles them. To restore their reputation and status, so that their own interests are not harmed, antichrists are willing to endure any amount of suffering, and they will think up every possible method to solve any difficulty. From the very start of their transgression or mistake, antichrists never have any intention of

bearing any responsibility for the wrong things they do, they never have any intention to admit, fellowship about, expose, or dissect the motives, intents, and corrupt dispositions behind the wrong things they do, and they certainly never have any intention to make up for the damage they cause to the work of the church and the loss they cause to the life entry of God's chosen people. Therefore, no matter what perspective you view the matter from, antichrists are people who stubbornly refuse to admit their wrongdoings and would rather die than repent. Antichrists are shameless and thick-skinned beyond all hope of redemption, and they are no less than living Satans" (The Word, Vol. 4. Exposing Antichrists. Item Eleven). I saw from God's words that antichrists especially value their own status and reputation. No matter how many flaws or omissions they commit in their duty, or how great losses they bring to the church's work, they never admit fault. They're afraid that others will see their shortcomings and look down on them. So, once they realize that they've committed a mistake that would disgrace themselves, they'll be ill at ease, unable to eat or sleep well. They'll rack their brains, thinking up ways to cover their tracks and restore their own reputation. The same was true of my behavior. I viewed my own status and reputation as being so important that when I found a problem at work, I didn't feel any remorse for my oversight. I didn't reflect on what happened to avoid future mistakes. All I could think about was how everyone would view me when they learned I'd made such basic errors, and whether they would look down on me, or think I wasn't up to doing my job. To maintain my own status and reputation, I spent all day feeling uneasy, to the point that I couldn't sleep. All I thought about was how to cover up my mistake, and avoid being found out. I wanted to shirk my responsibility, hide my mistakes, and prevent others from finding out. I didn't want to stand up and admit fault. I was

truly deceitful, without character or dignity! In fact, as the person in charge, I knew those processes well. There was no doubt that I was the main person responsible. Still, I hoped I could get away with it, and spread the blame around. In the end, when I realized that I couldn't shirk responsibility, I persisted in playing the victim, chalking it all up to bad luck. I didn't self-reflect. I just complained about my bad luck. I covered up my mistakes and engaged in deceit to protect my status. It was the behavior of an antichrist. When I realized this, I felt scared. I knew how dangerous it was for me to continue this way, unrepentant, just like an antichrist!

I also realized that part of why I was so stubborn and unwilling to admit fault was because I'd been bound and constrained by my position as person in charge, which led me to deal with my mistakes incorrectly. I found some of God's words about this. Almighty God says: **"How should you practice to be an ordinary and normal person? How can this be done? ... Firstly, don't give yourself a title and become bound by it, saying, 'I am the leader, I am the head of the team, I am the supervisor, no one knows this business better than me, no one understands the skills more than me.' Don't get caught up in your self-appointed title. As soon as you do, it will bind your hands and feet, and what you say and do will be affected. Your normal thinking and judgment will also be affected. You must free yourself from the constraints of this status. First, lower yourself from this official title and position and stand in the place of an ordinary person. If you do, your mentality will become somewhat normal. You must also admit and say, 'I don't know how to do this, and I don't understand that, either—I'm going to have to do some research and studying,' or 'I've never experienced this, so I don't know what to do.' When you are capable of saying what you're really thinking and speaking honestly, you will be possessed of normal reason.**

Others will know the real you, and will thus have a normal view of you, and you will not have to put on an act, nor will there be any great pressure on you, and so you will be able to communicate with people normally. Living like this is free and easy; anyone who finds living exhausting has caused this themselves” (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. Treasuring God’s Words Is the Foundation of Belief in God). “When someone in the church is promoted and cultivated to be a leader, they are merely promoted and cultivated in the straightforward sense; it does not mean that they are already an up-to-standard leader, or a competent one, that they are already capable of undertaking the work of a leader, and can do real work—that is not the case. Most people cannot see through to these things, and based on their own imaginings they look up to those who have been promoted. This is a mistake. No matter how many years they have believed in God for, do those who are promoted really possess the truth reality? Not necessarily. Are they able to implement the work arrangements of the house of God? Not necessarily. Do they have a sense of responsibility? Are they loyal? Are they able to submit? When they encounter an issue, are they able to seek the truth? All of this is unknown. Do these people have God-fearing hearts? And just how great are their God-fearing hearts? Are they able to avoid following their own will when they do things? Are they able to seek God? During the time that they perform the work of leaders, are they able to frequently come before God to seek the intentions of God? Are they able to lead people into the truth reality? They are certainly incapable of such things. They haven’t received training and they haven’t had enough experiences, so they are incapable of these things. This is why promoting and cultivating someone doesn’t mean they already understand the truth, nor is it

saying that they are already capable of doing their duty in a way that is up to standard” (The Word, Vol. 5. The Responsibilities of Leaders and Workers. The Responsibilities of Leaders and Workers (5)). From God’s words, I understood that being a leader or a person in charge doesn’t automatically mean you are qualified, higher up, or better than other people. It’s a chance to develop your skills and train through work. Training reveals people’s corrupt dispositions, and there will always be setbacks and failures. That’s perfectly normal. But when I’d put myself in the position of person in charge, I thought I needed to be better than others, not making the same mistakes as them, or revealing the same corruption as them. So, when I made a mistake, I didn’t want to admit it. I kept pretending and covering it up. I spent all my time filled with worry, living a hard and tiring life, all because I valued my own status and reputation. Also, I realized that making mistakes and losing face weren’t necessarily bad things. Just as God’s words say: **“Making a fool of yourself is a good thing. It helps you to see your own deficiencies and your love of vanity. It shows you where your problems lie and it helps you to understand clearly that you are not a perfect person. There are no perfect people and making a fool of yourself is very normal. All people experience times where they make a fool of themselves or are embarrassed. All people fail, experience setbacks, and have weaknesses. Making a fool of yourself is not bad. When you make a fool of yourself but do not feel embarrassed, and do not feel depressed deep inside, that does not mean you are thick-skinned; it means that you do not care whether making a fool of yourself will affect your reputation and it means that your vanity no longer occupies your thoughts. It means that you have matured in your humanity. This is wonderful! Is this not a good thing? It is a good thing. Do not think that you have not performed well or that you have bad luck, and do not**

look for the objective causes behind it. It is normal” (The Word, Vol. 6. On the Pursuit of the Truth I. How to Pursue the Truth (2)). After this series of mistakes and my disgraceful efforts to hide them, I finally gained some knowledge of myself. I saw that I was no better than my brothers and sisters. I’d done my duty carelessly, showing too much concern for my own reputation and status. I didn’t even have the courage to own up to my mistake. I wanted to cover it up and deceive everyone. I was a deceitful hypocrite. In fact, it’s not scary to face problems when doing one’s duty. As long as you’re an open, honest person and you face your mistakes calmly, reflecting on them so you can avoid similar issues in the future, you can still gain something. This is the attitude and reason that people ought to have. Now that I understood God’s intention, I didn’t care what other people thought of me. I’d already impacted our work. I had to get to the bottom of what had caused these mistakes, in order to avoid making them again in future.

Later, I read a passage of God’s words: **“When one can be serious, take responsibility, and give all their heart and strength, the work will be done properly. Sometimes you are in the wrong state of mind, and cannot find or discover a mistake that is clear as day. If you were in the right state of mind, then, with the enlightenment and guidance of the Holy Spirit, you would be able to identify the issue. If the Holy Spirit guided you and gave you an awareness, allowing you to feel clarity at heart and to know where the error lies, you would then be able to correct the deviation and strive for the truth principles. If you were in the wrong state of mind, and were absent-minded and careless, would you be able to notice the mistake? You would not. What is seen from this? This shows that to perform their duties well, it is very important that people cooperate; their frames of mind are very important, and where they direct their thoughts and ideas is very important. God**

scrutinizes and can see what state of mind people are in, and how much energy they exert as they perform their duties. It is crucial that people put all their hearts and strength into what they do. Their cooperation is a crucial component. Only if people strive to have no regrets about the duties they have completed and the things they have done, and not to be in debt to God, will they be acting with all their hearts and strength”

(The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. Part Three). God’s words state that when someone’s mentality is wrong, and they’re absent-minded and sloppy in their duty, they can’t see the mistakes that are right in front of their eyes. My situation was just as God says. These two mistakes were staring me in the face—if I’d paid a little more attention, I would’ve found them easily. But I didn’t notice them. One video had to be reworked and another was made twice, costing us manpower and resources. And, in fact, this had a lot to do with my mentality at the time. I thought that I was a veteran at this job, that I knew the workflow like the back of my hand, so I wasn’t as cautious as I was when I first started. I was arrogant and careless. Especially regarding the initial checks, I thought it was simple, that I could just go through the motions based on my previous experience. I didn’t pay attention, I didn’t check the work carefully, and in the end, I made such basic errors. And this was all because I’d been living within an arrogant disposition, and muddling through in my duty. Later, I opened up to my brothers and sisters about the mistakes I’d made in my duty. I summarized the problems in our work, and proposed some norms that would help prevent similar problems in the future. Through this, I found some peace of mind.

Before long, I was in charge of a new project. But because I’d never done this kind of video before, I didn’t have a firm grasp of all the ins and outs, so some problems appeared during the production. Even though

sometimes I was worried about what other people would think, I treated the problems with the right mindset, without being constrained by my pride and status. With each mistake, I recorded it and summarized the aberrations, in order to find a way to keep it from happening again. After doing this, I was able to see God's guidance, catching and correcting a lot of problems before they caused the church any losses. Through this experience, I learned that having the right mindset and diligently doing one's duty brings God's guidance and protection. At the same time, I learned that embarrassing oneself through mistakes or failures is not a bad thing. It helped me to see my own shortcomings and corruption, to put aside my vanity, and to treat myself correctly. Thanks be to God!

50. God's Word Is the Strength of My Life

By Li Zhi, China

In the year 2000, I was fortunate enough to hear the kingdom gospel of Almighty God. By reading God's words, I came to understand the mystery of God's names, the mystery of God's incarnations, and the truths regarding things such as how God's three stages of work save mankind, and how they thoroughly change, purify and perfect man. I became certain that Almighty God is the Lord Jesus returned, and I gladly accepted God's kingdom gospel. After that, I actively joined in with the church life, and with spreading the gospel and bearing witness for God. In 2002, I became known around the local area for preaching the gospel and was in constant danger of being arrested by the police. I had no choice but to flee my home so that I could continue to perform my duty.

The CCP government has always used telephones as a means to monitor and arrest Christians, so I didn't dare call my family after I left home. By early 2003 I had been apart from my family for almost a year, so I went to my mother-in-law's home to see my husband because I missed them so much. When my husband's younger brother saw that I had gone back, he called my mom and told her that I was at my mother-in-law's house. To my surprise, three hours later, four policemen from the Municipal Public Security Bureau came to my mother-in-law's house in a police car. The moment they entered the house, they said to me fiercely, "We're from the Municipal Public Security Bureau. You're Li Zhi, right? You've been on our wanted list for almost a year, and now we've finally got you! You're coming with us!" I was incredibly afraid; and I prayed to God in my heart nonstop, "Oh Almighty God! I'm arrested today with Your permission. But I'm of such small stature, and I feel timid and afraid. Please guide me and

protect me, and grant me faith and strength. No matter how they treat me, I wish to rely on You and stand firm in my witness. I'd rather spend the rest of my life in prison than be a Judas and betray You!" After praying, I thought of these words from God: **"His disposition is the symbol of authority, the symbol of all that is just, the symbol of all that is beautiful and good. More than that, it is a symbol of Him who cannot be overcome or invaded by the darkness and any enemy force ..."** (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. It Is Very Important to Understand God's Disposition). "That's right," I thought to myself. "God holds sovereignty and rules over all things. Over the past few years, the CCP government has done all it can to disrupt and obstruct the spreading of God's kingdom gospel, and yet those of every denomination who thirsted for the truth and heard God's voice have returned before His throne and accepted His salvation of the last days. This shows God's almightiness and sovereignty, and that no force can stand in the way of what God intends to accomplish. Although I have now fallen into the hands of the police, they themselves are in God's hands. With God by my side, what is there to fear?" God's words gave me faith and strength, and I gradually began to calm down.

I was escorted to an interrogation room after we arrived at the Municipal Public Security Bureau. The police took away my belt, removed my clothing, shoes and socks, and then searched me. Afterward, one of the policemen shouted, "You just be quick and tell us everything you know! How many years have you been a believer? Who preached the gospel to you? Who are your church leaders? How many people have you preached to? What do you do in the church?" I didn't answer his questions, and he immediately cursed angrily out of embarrassment, "Damn you. If you don't start talking, then we have plenty of ways to make you talk!" While saying this he aggressively dragged me from the chair down onto the floor. Two

officers stomped on my legs while two others stomped hard on my back. My head was nearly slammed onto the floor and I was finding it hard to draw breath. One of the policemen then took a pencil and lightly drew it back and forth along the arches of my feet, hurting and tickling me at the same time. It was unbearable; it was so hard to breathe that I was on the verge of suffocating, and the fear of death came upon me. One of them proceeded to threaten me, “Are you going to talk or not? If not, we’ll torture you to death!” I felt really afraid in the face of the torment and intimidation of this gang of police; I was worried that they would torture me to death. So I kept praying to God, asking Him to grant me faith and strength, and to protect me so that I could stand firm in my witness and not become a Judas and betray Him. After praying, these words of God came to mind: **“Faith is like a single log bridge: Those who cling abjectly to life will have difficulty in crossing it, but those who are ready to sacrifice themselves can pass over, sure of foot and worry-free. If man harbors timid and fearful thoughts, it is because Satan has fooled them, afraid that we will cross the bridge of faith to enter into God”** (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. Utterances of Christ in the Beginning, Chapter 6). Inspired by God’s words, I immediately felt strength rise up within me, and I realized that my timidity and fear of death were the result of being toyed with by Satan. The CCP was hoping to use cruel torture to force me to give in to its despotic power, to make me sell out the church and become a God-betraying Judas out of fear of dying. There was no way I could allow Satan’s cunning plot to succeed, and I decided I would stand firm in my witness for God even at the cost of my own life. At that time, the police continued torturing me in the same way, but I no longer felt so afraid. I knew that this was God showing me His mercy and protection, and I felt incredibly grateful to Him.

Two of the policemen then cuffed me back on the chair and sternly asked me the same questions again. Seeing that I still made no answer, they intensified the torture. They pulled my arms out straight and then forcefully pulled them back and up behind me. Instantly, they felt like they were going to snap and the rending pain of it made me break out in a full-body sweat; I couldn't help but let out a scream. They then pulled up my legs until my feet were above my head, and then pulled my legs in opposite directions. The tearing agony of it caused me to almost black out. In my heart, I just kept praying to God, "Oh Almighty God! Please grant me faith and strength and the determination to endure this pain. May You be my staunch backup, giving strength to my spirit. No matter what cruel methods of torture this gang of demons uses on me, I will rely on You and stand firm in my witness." After I'd prayed, a hymn of God's words appeared in my mind:

Trials Call for Faith

1 While undergoing trials, it is normal for people to be weak, or to have negativity within them, or to lack clarity on God's intentions or their path for practice. But in any case, you must have faith in God's work, and not deny God, just like Job. Although Job was weak and cursed the day of his own birth, he did not deny that all things in human life were bestowed by Jehovah, and that Jehovah is also the One to take them all away. No matter what trials he was put through, he maintained this belief.

2 ... What He perfects by working in this way is people's faith, love, and aspirations. God does the work of perfection on people, and they cannot see it, cannot feel it; under such circumstances, your faith is required. People's faith is required when something cannot be seen by the naked eye, and your faith is required when you cannot let go of

your own notions. When you do not have clarity about God's work, what is required of you is to have faith and to take a firm stance and stand strong in your testimony. When Job reached this point, God appeared to him and spoke to him. That is, it is only from within your faith that you will be able to see God, and when you have faith God will perfect you.

—The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. Those Who Are to Be Made Perfect
Must Undergo Refinement

God's words gave me great faith and strength. I thought of the immense trials Job went through, when his whole body was wracked with painful boils and he suffered terrible pain. And yet, despite his pain, he was still able to seek God's intention; he didn't sin with his words or deny God, but instead he submitted to God and extolled God's holy name. Job possessed true faith and fear of God, and that is why he was able to stand firm in his witness for God and utterly shame and defeat Satan—ultimately, God appeared and spoke to him. The adversity and trial that had now befallen me had also been permitted by God. Although I didn't fully understand God's intention and my flesh was suffering extreme pain, it was God who had the final say on whether I lived or died, and without His permission, the police could never take my life no matter how much they tortured me. These policemen looked ferocious on the outside, but before God they were just paper tigers, just tools in God's hands. God was using their brutality and persecution to perfect my faith. I would hand myself over completely into His hands, and rely on God to overcome Satan, and I no longer feared the policemen. The police tortured me repeatedly. Seeing that I still wasn't talking, one of the policemen picked up a white steel ruler about 50 cm long and began to viciously hit me across the face with it. I had no idea how many times I was hit; my face swelled up and it was burning

with pain. All I could see was stars floating before my eyes and my head was buzzing. Two of the policemen then used the heels of their leather shoes to stomp down on my thighs. Each blow left me wracked with excruciating pain. In my suffering, I called out to God earnestly in my heart, asking Him to protect me so that I could overcome the cruel torture inflicted on me by the CCP police.

At 8 a.m. the next morning, the head of the Criminal Police Brigade entered the interrogation room. Upon learning that the police hadn't been able to get any information out of me, he said fiercely, "You're refusing to talk, aren't you? Humph! We'll see about that!" And then he left. That afternoon, a fat officer with an ID card in his hand came up to me and asked, "Do you know this person?" I immediately saw that it was a church sister from the same village as me. I thought to myself, "No matter what, I must not sell out my sister." And so, I responded, "No, I don't know her." His eyes narrowed, and he picked up an electroshock baton that was lying on the table. Waving it before my face, threateningly he said, "You're a stubborn one. We know you're a leader in the church, so fess up! How many members are there in your church? Where is the church's money? If you don't tell me, I'll give you a taste of this electroshock baton!" Looking at the policeman's malevolent face, I felt extremely afraid and hurriedly said a silent prayer to God. Just then, God's words came to mind: **"Do not fear, the Almighty God of hosts will surely be with you; He stands behind you and He is your shield"** (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. Utterances of Christ in the Beginning, Chapter 26). Possessed of authority, God's words gave me faith and strength and I instantly felt like I had someone to lean on. I thought to myself, "God is almighty, and no matter how fiendish Satan and demons are, are they not also in God's hands? With Almighty God as my staunch backup, I have nothing to fear!" I therefore replied

calmly, “I don’t know anything.” The fat policeman said maliciously, “This is what you get for not knowing anything!” As he said this, he touched my handcuffs with the electroshock baton and a powerful surge of electric current shot through my whole body in an unbearably painful wave—the agony was indescribable. The policeman continued to shock me with the baton, and just when I nearly couldn’t stand it any longer, a miracle happened: It ran out of power! I had witnessed God’s almightiness and sovereignty, and moreover I had experienced the fact that God is always by my side, watching over me, protecting me, and taking my weakness into consideration. My faith grew and my resolve to stand firm in my witness for God was strengthened.

The police later saw that I still wasn’t going to talk, and so in twos they took turns watching me. They wouldn’t let me eat, drink or even sleep. The moment I began to doze off, they would beat and kick me, hoping that this would break my will. God guided me to see through their cunning scheme, however, and I prayed silently to God, sang hymns in my mind and contemplated God’s words and, before I knew it, my spirits rose. These policemen, on the other hand, were constantly drinking coffee and yet were still so tired that they kept yawning. One of them said in astonishment, “She must have some kind of magical power keeping her going, otherwise how else is she finding all this energy?” Hearing the policeman say this, I praised the great power of God over and over again, for I knew well in my heart that all of this was down to the guidance of God’s words, and that it was God’s own life force holding me up and granting me faith and strength. Although I didn’t know what other kinds of cruel torture the police had in store for me, I had the faith to rely on God to face the interrogations to come, and I resolved that I would never yield to the despotic power of the CCP, but would stand firm in my witness for God!

On the evening of the third day, the head of the Criminal Police Brigade poured me a cup of hot water and, feigning concern, said, “Don’t be stupid now. Someone else has sold you out already, so what’s the point in enduring all this for other people? Just tell me everything you know and I promise to let you go. Your son is still young and needs his mother’s love. You could have a good life, and yet you waste it believing in some God! God cannot save you, but we can. We can help you with any difficulty you may have, and we can help you find a good job when you get out of here....” As I listened to him talk, I couldn’t help but think of my young son, wondering how he had been since my arrest. Would my nonbelieving friends and relatives mock him? Would his classmates at school bully him? Just as I was beginning to weaken, God enlightened me with a passage of His words: **“You must be awake and waiting at all times, and you must pray before Me more. You must recognize the various plots and cunning schemes of Satan, recognize the spirits, know people, and be able to discern all kinds of people, events, and things ...”** (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. Utterances of Christ in the Beginning, Chapter 17). Inspired by God’s words, I came to the clear realization that Satan was using my affections for my family to lure me into betraying God. Satan knew that I loved my son most of all and was using the police as its mouthpiece to attack and tempt me, hoping to make me sell out my brothers and sisters out of love for my son. I would then become a God-betraying Judas who would ultimately end up being cursed and punished by God—Satan is so insidious and malicious! I thought about how I couldn’t be with my son to look after him, but wasn’t it all because the CCP frantically arrested and persecuted Christians? And yet the police were saying that it was because I believed in God. By saying this, were they not turning the truth on its head and distorting the facts? The CCP is so shameless and wicked! And so, no

matter what the policeman said, I paid him no attention whatsoever. Seeing that I couldn't be swayed either by the carrot or the stick, he stalked off in a huff. Under the guidance and protection of God, I had once again overcome Satan's temptation.

It was after 8 p.m. that evening when the fat policeman returned with a large electroshock baton in hand and three underlings trailing along behind him. They took me to a gym and stripped my clothes off (leaving me just in my underwear), then tied me to a treadmill with a rope. Looking at their faces, each one more malevolent than the last, left me feeling incredibly fearful and helpless, and I had no idea what cruel torture they were going to inflict on me next or how long it would go on for. I felt so weak at that moment and began to have thoughts of death. But straight away, I knew that these thoughts were wrong, and so I hurriedly prayed and called out to God, "Oh Almighty God! You know my heart, and I don't want to be a Judas who betrays You and go down in history as a traitor. But my stature is so small, and I feel so pained and weak in the face of this torment—I'm afraid that I won't be able to stand it and will betray You. O God! Please protect me and grant me faith and strength. Please be with me, guide and lead me, and enable me to stand firm in my witness through this cruel torture." After praying, I thought of God's words that say: **"During these last days you must bear testimony to God. No matter how great your suffering, you should walk until the very end, and even at your last breath, still you must be faithful to God and at the mercy of God; only this is truly loving God, and only this is the strong and resounding testimony"** (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. Only by Experiencing Painful Trials Can You Know the Loveliness of God). God's words brought me comfort and encouragement. They allowed me to understand that God was permitting this cruel torture to be inflicted upon me so that true faith and love could be

wrought within me, so that I could continue to stay loyal to God through my suffering, submit to God's orchestrations and arrangements, and stand firm in my witness by leaning on God's words no matter how great the trial or how terrible the pain. Having understood God's intention, the courage and resolve to fight Satan to the bitter end arose within me, and I made this resolution: No matter what torture I still have to go through, I will keep on living, and no matter how great my suffering becomes, I will follow God till my very last breath! Just then, the fat policeman, a cigarette dangling from his mouth, came over and asked, "Will you talk or not?" Resolutely, I replied, "You can beat me to death, but I still don't know anything." In a fury, he flung his cigarette onto the floor and, seething with rage, he jammed the electroshock baton into my back and thighs over and over again. The excruciating pain made me break out in a cold sweat all over my body, and I just kept wailing pitifully. While jamming the baton into me, he roared, "This is what you get for not talking! I'll make you scream! We'll see how long you last!" The other officers in the room standing off to the side laughed raucously and said, "How come your God doesn't come to save you?" They also said many other things blaspheming God. Seeing their demonic faces, I called earnestly on God to grant me faith and strength so that I could endure the pain and wipe that smile off Satan's face. After praying, I clenched my mouth shut and refused to make another sound no matter how they tormented me. They electrocuted me constantly. When one electroshock baton ran out of power, they swapped it for another, and I was tortured to the point that my mind was all a blur and death seemed preferable to life. I couldn't move a muscle and they thought I'd passed out. They threw cold water over me to wake me and then continued to electrocute me. In my pain, I thought of God's words that say: **"This gang of accomplices in crime! They come down into the mortal realm to**

indulge in pleasures and cause a commotion, stirring things up so much that the world becomes a fickle and inconstant place and the heart of man is filled with panic and unease ... they even wish to assume sovereign power on earth. They impede the work of God so much that it can barely inch forward, and they close man off as tightly as walls of copper and steel. Having committed so many grievous sins and caused so many disasters, are they still expecting something other than chastisement? Demons and evil spirits have been running amok on earth for a time, and have sealed off both the intentions and the painstaking effort of God so tightly that they are impenetrable. Truly, this is a mortal sin! How can God not feel anxious? How can God not feel wrathful? They have gravely hindered and opposed the work of God: How rebellious! Even those demons, big and small, behave like jackals at the heels of the lion, and follow the evil current, contriving disturbances as they go. Knowing the truth, they deliberately oppose it, these sons of rebellion!” (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. Work and Entry (7)). The enlightenment of God’s words allowed me to see clearly the true face of the CCP government. It utterly hates the truth and God, and it is terrified of Almighty God’s words spreading far and wide. It does all it can to stop God’s kingdom gospel from spreading, and it stops at nothing to arrest, torture and brutalize God’s chosen people, wishing to destroy God’s work of the last days, to stop people from believing in and following God, and to turn China into an atheistic zone, thereby achieving its insane objective of controlling the Chinese people forevermore. Despite the fact that the CCP proclaims to the outside world that there is “freedom of belief” and “the citizens of China enjoy lawful rights,” in truth, these are all devilish words intended to cheat, dupe and ensnare people, and they are ploys to conceal its evil ways. The CCP behaves perversely and acts

contrary to Heaven, and its essence is that of the devil Satan, of an enemy of God! Right at that moment, I silently made a resolution: I must not allow the painstaking price God has paid for me to have been in vain; I must have determination and a conscience, and no matter what cruel torture I have yet to endure, I will always stand firm in my witness for God. Just then, a feeling of justice rose up within me, and I felt God by my side, giving me strength. Afterward, no matter how the policemen electrocuted me, I felt no pain. I had once again witnessed God's wondrous deeds; I became profoundly aware of God's presence, that it was God protecting me and watching over me. The policemen tortured me for four hours but still obtained no information from me. Out of options, they could do nothing but untie me from the treadmill. I didn't have an ounce of strength anywhere in my body and I flopped down onto the floor. Two policemen dragged me back to the interrogation room and put me in a chair, then handcuffed me to a central heating pipe. Seeing them look so deflated, I couldn't stop myself from expressing thanks and praise to God, "Oh Almighty God! I have experienced Your almightiness and sovereignty, and I see that Your word can defeat all other forces. Thanks be to God!"

On the fourth day, five policemen came into the interrogation room. One of them carried an electroshock baton and made it crackle with electricity. Days of brutal torture had filled me with terror at the sight of a baton emitting that terrible blue light. An officer who hadn't questioned me before came and stood before me, jabbed me with the electroshock baton and said, "I hear you're a tough nut to crack. Today, I'll see exactly how tough you are. I don't believe we can't fix you. Are you going to talk or not? If not, then you'll meet your end this very day!" I replied, saying, "I don't know anything." This embarrassed him into a rage, and he violently dragged me off the chair onto the floor and held me there. Another

policeman shoved the electroshock baton up under my shirt, yelling as he shocked my back, “Are you going to talk or not? If not, we’ll kill you!” Faced with their brutality and their hideous, leering faces, I couldn’t help but slip down into a state of terror, and hurriedly I called out to God, “Oh Almighty God! Please grant me faith and strength....” The police continued to electrocute me while I wailed nonstop. It felt as though all the blood in my body was rushing into my head, and it hurt so much that I was covered in sweat and almost blacked out. Seeing that I still wasn’t going to talk, the police began to curse me in their rage. A little later when I was on the verge of passing out, they dragged me back up and cuffed me to the chair again, after which two of them took turns watching me to make sure I didn’t fall asleep. By that time, I hadn’t eaten any food, drunk any water, or had any sleep for four days and nights. Adding to that the cruel torture they were inflicting on me, my body had reached its weakest state. I was both cold and hungry, and the pain of both starving and freezing cold joined with the throbbing pain of my wounded body—I felt as though my life was nearing its end. In my extremely weakened state, a line of God’s words appeared in my mind: **“Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God”** (Matthew 4:4). Pondering this, I understood that only the words of God could be my support to carry on living in such a situation as this, while at the same time I also realized that it was precisely through this situation that God guided me into this aspect of the truth. As I contemplated this over and over again, I unknowingly forgot all about my suffering, my hunger and the cold.

On the fifth day, the police saw that I was remaining steadfastly silent, and began to threaten me maliciously, saying, “You just wait until you’ve been sentenced. You’ll get seven years at least, but there’s still a chance to avoid it if you start talking now!” I then silently said a prayer to God, “Oh

Almighty God! The CCP police say they will sentence me to seven years in prison, but I know that they don't have the final say, as my fate is in Your hands. Oh God! I would rather be imprisoned for the rest of my life and stay on the true way than ever betray You!" After that, the police tried to lure me into betraying God by bringing in my nonbelieving husband. When he saw me wearing handcuffs with cuts and bruises all over my whole body, he said miserably to me, "I've only ever seen handcuffs on TV. I never thought I'd see them on you." Hearing him say this and seeing his sorrowful expression, I hurriedly prayed to God, asking Him to protect me so that I wouldn't be caught by Satan's trap because of my affections for my family. After I'd prayed, I said calmly to my husband, "I believe in God, I don't steal things or rob people. I just go to gatherings and read God's words. I haven't committed any crime, but they want to sentence me to prison." My husband replied, "I'll find you a lawyer." Seeing that my husband wasn't trying to get me to hand over information about the church and my brothers and sisters, but was instead offering to hire me a lawyer, the policemen dragged him out of the room. I knew that this was God protecting me; because my affections for my family ran very deep, if my husband had said anything that showed concern for my physical state, I didn't know whether I would have been able to stay strong. It was the guidance and protection of God that enabled me to overcome Satan's temptation. The police saw that I wasn't falling for their tricks and, spluttering with rage, they said, "We'll give you an injection in a minute which will drive you mad. Then, we'll let you go. You won't be able to die even if you want to, and you won't be able to live your life properly either!" This immediately threw me into a state of anxiety, and terror gripped me once again. I thought about how cruel and evil the CCP government is: If they arrest someone in charge of the church, and still can't get anything

about the church out of them after vicious beatings and torture, they will forcibly inject them with drugs that will drive them mad and cause them to become schizophrenic—some brothers and sisters have been cruelly harmed in this way by the CCP. My heart began to pound in my chest at that thought, and I wondered, “Will I really be tormented by these CCP minions until I lose my mind and end up wandering around like a lunatic?” The more I thought about it, the more afraid I became, and I couldn’t stop the cold sweat from soaking my body. Hurriedly, I prayed and called out to God, “Oh Almighty God! The CCP minions want to inject me with drugs to drive me mad, and I’m afraid I’ll become a lunatic. Oh God! I feel so fearful right now. Oh God! Please protect my heart, and grant me faith so that I can submit to Your orchestrations and arrangements.” Just then, the Lord Jesus’ words came to mind: **“And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear Him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell”** (Matthew 10:28). God’s words gave me faith and strength. “Yes,” I thought. “These devils may be able to kill and maim my body, but they cannot kill or maim my soul. Without God’s permission, I will not go crazy even if they do inject me with those drugs.” I then thought of God’s words that say: **“When people are ready to sacrifice their lives, everything becomes trifling, and no one can get the better of them. What could be more important than life? Thus, Satan becomes incapable of doing any more in people, there is nothing it can do with man”** (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. Interpretations of the Mysteries of “God’s Words to the Entire Universe,” Chapter 36). As I pondered God’s words, the fear I felt deep inside me slowly vanished and I no longer felt that terror. Instead, I became willing to place myself in God’s hands and submit to God’s sovereignty whether I lived or died, and whether I became a lunatic or a simpleton. Just then, a policeman brought over the needle and the drug,

and threatened me, saying, “Will you talk or not? If you don’t talk, I’ll inject you with this!” Utterly without fear, I said, “Do what you want. Whatever happens is up to you.” Seeing that I wasn’t afraid, he said cruelly, “Go fetch the one with the AIDS virus! We’ll inject her with that.” As I still showed no fear, he clenched his teeth in anger, and said, “You bitch. You’re really a tough nut to crack!” He then threw the needle onto the table. Hearing what they said, I felt elated. Having witnessed how God’s words had guided me to once again humiliate Satan, I couldn’t help but offer up a prayer of gratitude to God. In the end, the police realized that they wouldn’t get the information they wanted out of me, so they walked away dejectedly.

Having played all their cards to no avail, the police could do nothing but send me to a detention house. As soon as I got there, the prison guards incited the other prisoners, saying, “She’s a believer in Eastern Lightning. Give her ‘a warm welcome’!” Before I even had a chance to react, several of the prisoners surged toward me and dragged me to the toilet and then, after stripping me of my clothes, proceeded to wash me in freezing cold water. They poured pots of cold water over me, and I became so cold that I was shivering all over. I squatted down on the floor, my head in my hands, calling out to God over and over again within my heart. After a while, one of the prisoners said, “OK, OK, that’s enough. Don’t let her get sick.” The prisoners who were tormenting me only stopped when they heard that prisoner say this. When she learned that I hadn’t eaten anything in five days, at dinnertime she gave me half a bun of steamed cornbread. I was well aware that this was God’s consideration for my weakness, moving this prisoner to help me. I saw that God was with me always, and from the bottom of my heart I thanked God.

Inside the detention house, I lived together with all sorts of other prisoners. Every one of our three meals consisted of a piece of steamed

cornbread and two strips of salted turnip, or else it was a bowl of cabbage soup with bugs floating in it with hardly any cabbage at all. Once a week, we were given a meal of fine grain, which was still just one steamed bun the size of a fist—it didn't fill me up at all. Besides memorizing and reading the prison rules, every day in that place we were given work quotas for making small handicrafts that were impossible to meet. Because my hands had been damaged by the tight handcuffs and had been electrocuted to the point where I'd lost all feeling in them, and on top of that the handicrafts we had to make were so small, I couldn't hold them, and was incapable of completing my overload of work. One time, because I hadn't completed my work, the prison guards made the other prisoners watch me all night to prevent me from falling asleep. I was also frequently punished by being made to stand sentry duty, and was only allowed to sleep for four hours a night. During this time, the police frequently questioned me. They had even put my son up to write me a letter, trying to trick me into betraying God. But under the protection and guidance of God, I was able to see through Satan's cunning schemes time and time again. Despite the fact that they hadn't managed to obtain anything incriminating, they still charged me with "disrupting public order" and sentenced me to three years of reeducation through labor.

On December 25, 2005, my sentence was served in full and I was released. Having experienced this arrest and persecution, though I had suffered in both body and mind, I saw clearly the God-opposing, demonic essence of the CCP. I also came to have some real understanding of God's almightiness, sovereignty, wondrousness, and wisdom, and I truly experienced God's love and His salvation. While those devils were torturing and persecuting me, it was the timely enlightenment and guidance of God's words that formed my staunch support and that gave me the resolve and the

courage to fight with Satan to the bitter end. When Satan was trying all manner of cunning schemes to tempt me and lure me into betraying God, it was God who used His words in the nick of time to remind me and guide me, and to wipe clean the dust from my spiritual eyes so that I could see through Satan's schemes; when those demons inflicted terrible torture on me to the point where death seemed preferable and my life hung by a thread, God's words became the foundation of my survival. They bestowed tremendous faith and strength on me, and enabled me to break free from the shackles death had on me. All of these things allowed me to truly see God's beautiful and kind essence—only God most loves mankind. The CCP, on the other hand, this Satan the devil, can only corrupt, harm and devour people! Today, in the face of the increasingly savage attacks inflicted upon The Church of Almighty God by the CCP, I am steadfastly resolved to utterly rebel against this old devil the CCP, to give my heart to God, and to do my utmost to pursue the truth. I will spread God's kingdom gospel and bring back before God all those who sincerely believe in God and yearn for the truth, thereby fulfilling my duty.

51. What Lay Behind My Family's Attacks

By Lingmin, China

My father was a school principal, and often talked about materialism at school and at home. He taught us that happiness relied on our own hard work, and that we had to apply ourselves to stand out and bring honor to our ancestors. Led by our parents' words and the example they set, my siblings and I all pursued fame, gain and status. We went into business or became officials.

In the spring of 2007, by chance I accepted Almighty God's work of the last days. I read God's words every day, fellowshiped with my brothers and sisters regularly, and gained some understanding of God's sovereignty. These words were especially impressive: **"God created this world, He created this mankind and, moreover, He was the architect of ancient Greek culture and human civilization. Only God consoles this mankind, and only God cares for this mankind night and day. Human development and progress are inseparable from the sovereignty of God, and the history and future of mankind are inextricable from the designs of God. If you are a true Christian, then you will surely believe that the rise and fall of any country or nation occurs according to the designs of God. God alone knows the fate of a country or nation, and God alone controls the course of this mankind. If mankind wishes to have a good fate, if a country wishes to have a good fate, then man must bow down to God in worship, repent and confess before God, or else the fate and destination of man will be an unavoidable catastrophe"** (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. Appendix 2: God Presides Over the Fate of All Mankind). God's words brightened my heart. God is the Creator, and it is He who has guided and sustained mankind to this day. What's more, He rules

over our fates. Only by worshiping God, repenting to Him, and accepting His salvation can we have a good destiny. I also learned that the Savior, Almighty God, has come in the last days to express the truth and do the work of judgment, to fully cleanse and save mankind, to lead us out of Satan's influence and into the beautiful destination God has prepared for us so we can have a good fate and outcome. I felt so blessed that I could accept Almighty God, and I swore to myself to practice my faith well, pursue the truth, and do a created being's duty to repay God's love.

But unexpectedly, when I was throwing myself into my duty, I was arrested by the Communist Party. One day in March 2009, at noon, the police came to our gathering, took three of my sisters and me, and illegally detained us at a police station. The Public Security Bureau chief yelled at me ferociously, "Tell us what you know! Who preached the gospel to you? Who's the leader of your church? If you talk, I'll let you go home right away. But if you don't cooperate, with all the religious books we found at your place, we could put you away for five or six years!" Seeing the fierce look on his face made my heart start pounding. I didn't know how they were going to treat me. I quickly said a prayer, asking God to protect me, to give me faith and strength, and let me stand strong. I thought of these words of God after praying: **"Those in power may seem vicious from the outside, but do not be afraid, for this is because you have little faith. As long as your faith grows, nothing will be too difficult"** (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. Utterances of Christ in the Beginning, Chapter 75). God's words gave me faith and strength. Absolutely all things are in God's hands. That Public Security chief looked scary, but he was in God's hands, too. He didn't have a say over whether I'd be sentenced—only God did. I couldn't cower before his abuses. Later on, they saw how I wouldn't talk, so they

locked me and three others in a detention center with the charge of disrupting social order.

One morning, out of the blue, I heard someone yell my name. My heart leaped into my throat. Were they going to interrogate me again? They'd questioned me before, and I hadn't said anything. I wondered if they would use even crueler tactics against me. Feeling afraid, I silently prayed to God, and I was able to gradually calm down. The police brought me into a large room. The moment I walked in, I saw my father, and my heart dropped. Why did they bring my father in? He had always opposed my faith, so how would he treat me now that I'd been arrested? Before I could say anything, my father raised his hand and smacked me on the head three times. I was dizzy and seeing stars. He said sternly, "I forbade you to have faith, but you insisted, and now that you've been arrested, my name has been dragged through the mud! Tell them everything about your belief! The police said they'll let you go as soon as you confess, but you'll get a heavy sentence if you don't!" Seeing my dad's aging face, I felt a pang of heartache. He was nearly 80, and his reputation had always mattered most to him. How could he bear it if I was sentenced? Then, suddenly, he got on his knees. With tears in his eyes, he said, "When your mother found out about this, she fell ill. She's bedridden at home, on an IV line. Tell them what you know and come home with me!" Faced with all that, I couldn't hold my tears back. Since ancient times, only children kneel to their parents, not the other way around. My parents had endured hardships raising me, and helped me with my own children. They still had to worry about me, at such an old age. They wouldn't be facing such pain and torment if I weren't a believer. I felt that I owed them—I felt awful. Then, I realized I wasn't in the right state. I said a quick prayer, "God! This situation is painful for me. I feel weak. I feel indebted to my parents. I don't

know what to do. Please enlighten and guide me so I can understand Your intention and stand strong.” After my prayer, I immediately thought of what I’d resolved to do before God—to be strong in my faith, follow God, and pursue loving Him with an unwavering heart. At that moment, I came to my senses. I also thought of God’s words: **“Are people incapable of putting aside their flesh for this short time? What things can cleave the love between man and God? Who is able to pull apart the love between man and God? Is it parents, husbands, sisters, wives, or painful refinement? Can the feelings of conscience wipe away God’s image within man? Are people’s indebtedness and actions toward each other their own doing? Can they be remedied by man? Who is able to protect themselves? Are people able to provide for themselves? Who are the strong ones in life? Who is able to leave Me and live on their own?”** (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. Interpretations of the Mysteries of “God’s Words to the Entire Universe,” Chapters 24 and 25). God’s words filled me with self-reproach. This very breath was given to me by God, and God provided me with everything I needed to survive. God silently caring for and protecting me was the only reason I’d lived to that day. He orchestrated people, events, and things to guide me to come before Him and accept His salvation. God’s love is so great! I couldn’t betray God out of fear of hurting my parents. Also, their health was in God’s hands, and any worrying on my part was useless. They were sad and in pain because of the Communist Party’s oppression. If they could see the Party’s evilness, they wouldn’t feel like they’d lost face, and Satan wouldn’t be able to fool them. Thinking about it this way, I didn’t feel so upset. I swore to stand firm in my testimony for God, even if I were put in prison. I wiped away my tears and helped my dad stand up. Then five or six officers came and surrounded me. I said to them, “I don’t know a thing.” One stared at me and said, “You have five minutes left.” My dad was so

mad. He smacked me a few more times, knelt down and said, “If you don’t talk, I’ll kneel here in front of you till I die! The Party doesn’t allow people to believe in God—how dare you go against it? Hurry up and confess! Then we can go home.” I realized, then, that this was a trick on the part of the police. They pressured my dad to make me a Judas and sell out the others. I felt angry, and resentful. Those cops are so treacherous! I helped my dad back up, and five or six officers surrounded me again, to get me to talk. I looked at them and said, calmly, “I don’t know a thing.” Just then, my dad’s phone started ringing, and he told me to answer. I could hear my mom on the phone, swearing and saying, “You’ll be the death of me! The government doesn’t allow faith, but you insist on it. You can’t hope to fight them! Just tell them what you know and come back! What will we do if you’re sentenced? How will your son ever find a wife? We’ll all be humiliated as well. You have to think of us!” In tears, I hung up the phone and watched my dad walk out, dragging his feet.

When I got back to my cell I thought again of my ill mother, lying in bed. If something terrible happened to her, I would be failing her. The more I thought about it, the worse I felt. I couldn’t hold my tears back. That’s when I realized that my affections were my Achilles’ heel. I threw myself into praying to God. I asked Him to guide me to take a stand, to not live based on affection. I remembered something that God said: **“Why is it so hard for people to separate themselves from their feelings? Does doing so surpass the standards of conscience? Can conscience fulfill God’s will? Can feelings help people through adversity? In God’s eyes, feelings are His enemy—has this not been clearly stated in God’s words?”** (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. Interpretations of the Mysteries of “God’s Words to the Entire Universe,” Chapter 28). God’s words opened my eyes. Affections are the enemy of God and the greatest barrier to practicing the

truth. When we live by affection, we grow distant from God and betray Him. I was stuck in my affections for my parents. I thought that being disobedient to them was a terrible offense, and made me a bad daughter. When I saw how sad and upset they were because of my arrest, I felt indebted to them. I felt like they had worked so hard to raise me, but I hadn't repaid them, and even made them suffer for me. This was unfilial. I valued my parents' kindness greatly but forgot that it's God who gives us life. God is the source of human life, and it's His breath of life that has sustained me to this day. It's thanks to God's guidance and provision that I have what I have now. God has given us so much without ever asking for anything in return. In the last days, God has incarnated again to save mankind, enduring great humiliations, as well as the Communist Party's pursuit and oppression. God has given everything for mankind—His love is so great! The One we should worship and submit to is God. My parents' care for me might have improved my material life, but they couldn't offer me the truth. They couldn't save me from Satan's corruption or give me a good destination and outcome. If I sold out the others and betrayed God just to go along with my parents' wishes, I wouldn't be indebted to them, but I'd be spurned by God, and lose His salvation forever. At that point I saw that Satan was using my affections for my parents to lure me into temptation, eventually getting me to grow distant from God, betray Him, lose my chance at salvation, go down to hell and be destroyed along with it. I couldn't fall for Satan's trick. It reminded me of Peter, who had principles and took a stand against his parents. He was strong in his faith and followed the Lord Jesus no matter how they tried to stop him. In the end, his love for God overcame everything and he gained God's approval. Thinking of these things really motivated me.

On the fifth day, the police brought three letters for me to read, written by my mom, my daughter, and my son. My son wrote, “Mom, during these last few years in the army, I’d been looking forward to the whole family reuniting. It wasn’t easy for me to get transferred and come back, and now you’re under arrest. Without you at home, I feel like the sky’s come crashing down. Mom, just tell the police about your religious stuff! If you go to prison, that’ll impact my prospects for work and marriage. Even if you don’t think of yourself, you should think of me....” At this point in the letter, I couldn’t help but start crying. If his good future really was going to be ruined because I did prison time, how would I be able to face him? He’d be sure to hate me! It felt, to me, like the road of faith was full of stumbling blocks, and each and every step required making a choice. I prayed to God in my heart, “Oh God, I’m really in pain, and feeling weak. Please watch over my heart and strengthen my faith.” Back in the cell, a sister found out what I was going through and reminded me not to fall for Satan’s trick. That was a wake-up call for me. I thought of how, at every moment, Satan uses all sorts of means to entice and mislead us into betraying God. We can fall into Satan’s net the moment we let down our guard. We have to continue to quiet our hearts before God, and pray and lean on Him to see through Satan’s tricks, gain God’s protection, and stand strong. That night I lay in bed, unable to sleep, and silently prayed to God. I remembered this from His words: **“From the moment you come crying into this world, you begin to fulfill your duty. For God’s plan and for His ordination, you perform your role and start your life’s journey. Whatever your background, and whatever the journey ahead of you, no one can escape the orchestrations and arrangements of Heaven, and no one is in control of their own destiny, for only He who rules over all things is capable of such work”** (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. God Is the

Source of Man's Life). That's right. Our entire lives, our destinies are arranged by God, and no one can change them. I couldn't control what kind of job or marriage my son would have in the future. No matter how much consideration or how many worries I had for my children, I couldn't change their fates, and whether I would go to prison or not was also determined by God. I couldn't get out of that just because I wanted to. What I needed to do was entrust everything to God and submit to His sovereignty and arrangements. After that, I thought of another passage of God's words: **"You must suffer hardship for the truth, you must give yourself to the truth, you must endure humiliation for the truth, and to gain more of the truth you must undergo more suffering. This is what you should do. You must not throw away the truth for the sake of a peaceful family life, and you must not lose your life's dignity and integrity for the sake of momentary enjoyment. You should pursue all that is beautiful and good, and you should pursue a path in life that is more meaningful. If you lead such a vulgar life, and do not pursue any objectives, do you not waste your life? What can you gain from such a life? You should forsake all enjoyments of the flesh for the sake of one truth, and should not throw away all truths for the sake of a little enjoyment. People like this have no integrity or dignity; there is no meaning to their existence!"** (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. The Experiences of Peter: His Knowledge of Chastisement and Judgment). God's words gave me faith and strength. As a believer, the only way to gain God's approval is by pursuing the truth and doing the duty of a created being. Only that can be considered a life of value, and any amount of suffering is worth it to gain the truth. If I sold out my brothers and sisters and the church just to satisfy my family, I'd be a Judas betraying God. That would be the greatest humiliation, and I would be cursed by God for it. Even with a happy family and a comfortable life, it

would be empty and meaningless, and I'd be no more than a walking corpse. At the thought of this, I felt even more resolved to follow God. No matter what tactics the cops used, I'd stand firm in my witness and shame Satan!

The police called me into the main hall on the sixth day, where I saw my uncle, my husband, my son and my daughter. My kids hugged me and cried, saying, "Mom, come home!" My husband also stood off to the side crying. Then my uncle said, in tears, "Lingmin, the police said you can come home as soon as you tell them something, and you won't have to do time. Your son's future will be ruined if you go to prison. It'll destroy the family! Listen to me, and talk to them!" At that moment, my heart was clear. I knew that Satan's ploy was behind my family's exhortations, and that if I even just gave them a little, the police would force a lot more out of me, and many others would be arrested. With this in mind, I said, "As a believer, I'm walking the right path in life. I haven't done anything illegal, so I don't have anything to confess. Go home." On my way back to my cell, I thought of the police using my loved ones over and over again to tempt me, to force me to sell out my brothers and sisters and betray God. The Communist Party is so vile! They're anti-God demons! After that, an officer called me into the office and said smugly, "How was the visit with your family?" Seeing him reveling in this awful situation, I got so mad I took those three letters out of my pocket, tore them up, threw them on the table, and said, "I'm a believer and an upright person. I haven't done anything bad. Why did you have them exhort me? What law have I broken?" Then I walked right out. Being able to calmly face the police's questioning was all thanks to the strength God gave me.

On the morning of the 14th day, the Public Security Bureau chief called me into the office. He wasn't fierce like before, but acted concerned,

and asked me about my family. He tried using flowery speech to lure me into selling out my brothers and sisters. I prayed to God in my heart nonstop, asking Him to protect me from falling for Satan's trick. The bureau chief said a lot. Finally, seeing that I wasn't saying anything, he became infuriated and yelled viciously, "I'll be straight with you. We found so many religious books in your house, it's the biggest case in town. You're sure to get prison time if you don't talk!" But no matter what he said, I silently prayed to God and swore that I'd never share information on the others and would never betray God, even if I were sentenced. After fifteen days, they saw that they couldn't get anything out of me, so they had no choice but to let me go home.

After getting home, my family still opposed and obstructed my faith. I knew it was all because of the Communist Party's misleading and persecution. I prayed and swore that I'd follow God till the end, no matter how hard it was. Then, a hymn came to mind titled "Never Disappoint God's Love": "I won't consider how hard it is to follow Christ. My only bounden duty is to follow God's will. I won't think about the future, whether I receive blessings or suffer misfortune. I've chosen to love God, so I'll never turn back. No matter how rough and dangerous the path ahead, no matter how much suffering awaits me, to welcome the day when God will gain glory, I'll closely follow God's footsteps and stay loyal to the end" (Follow the Lamb and Sing New Songs). I sang that hymn over and over again, and felt so inspired. I knew that the path of faith would always be accompanied by the Party's persecution, and that I'd probably be arrested again or even sentenced in the future. But I was certain that this was the true way, and I was ready to follow God until the end. For a while, I couldn't contact any other church members or live the life of the church. So, I ate and drank God's words, equipped myself with the truth at home, and shared the gospel

with my family. My husband and daughter became believers later. We gathered, and ate and drank God's words as a family. A year later, I was back in touch with the brothers and sisters, and began doing a duty. I was really grateful to God.

Thinking about what had happened this whole time—through the Communist Party's persecution and arrest, and my family's temptations and attacks—it was the enlightenment and guidance of God's words that got me through it, step by step. No matter how hard the path ahead of me is, I'm going to follow God until the end.

52. Principles Also Apply to Family

By Mike, South Korea

In October 2004, my wife and I accepted Almighty God's work in the last days, and our two children followed us in believing in God. I was particularly happy, thinking, "Our whole family believes in God. If we can all be saved and enter the kingdom, what a wonderful thing that would be!" Afterward, my wife and I both did our duties. My wife was more enthusiastic than I was, and I always felt she pursued the truth more than me.

In 2013, while my wife was serving as a group leader, the church leader Wang Jing pointed out her deviations and problems in doing her duties during a meeting. Later, my wife held onto Wang Jing's revelations of corruption, made arbitrary judgments, and spread them, which caused the brothers and sisters to develop prejudices against Wang Jing, resulting in many tasks being unimplemented and severely disturbing church life. The leader and the deacon fellowshiped with her multiple times, but she was defiant and dissatisfied, even arguing and being sophistical, not having the slightest knowledge of herself. As a result, the church dismissed her from her position. After being dismissed, she showed no sign of repentance and continued to find fault with Wang Jing, spreading judgments and gossiping everywhere. Due to her consistent disruption and disturbance of church life, some brothers and sisters exposed and reported her. Later, following a vote that was passed by 80% of the church members, my wife was defined as an evil person and expelled. At the time, when this happened, it felt quite painful. Thinking about how my wife had forsaken her career to do her duty since she started believing in God, braving all sorts of hardships for so many years, now that she was expelled, didn't it mean it was all over for

her? There was no hope whatsoever of salvation anymore. However, my wife didn't care at all and said, "I believe in God. It is pointless that they expelled me. I will still believe in God even after being expelled." Seeing that she had done so much evil and still didn't know herself even then, and that she was unconvinced and resentful about the church's decision, I felt that her being expelled by the church was not excessive at all. After her expulsion, many brothers and sisters who visited our home would fellowship with her and urge her to reflect and recognize herself, but she wouldn't accept it at all and argued irrationally, claiming that the leaders and the workers were against her and so had expelled her. What's more, she continued to harbor resentment toward Wang Jing.

Later, the house of God required all churches to review members previously cleared out or expelled to see if there was anyone who truly repented and could be readmitted. I thought, "Does my wife qualify for readmission? Since her expulsion, she hasn't reflected and gained knowledge of her actions, and continues to hold preconceived ideas against Wang Jing, judging her behind her back. She shows no sign of repentance, so according to the principles, she shouldn't be readmitted." But then I thought, "Since she was expelled, she still reads God's words from time to time, and supports us in doing our duties, and she also maintains this household, and takes care of my paralyzed, bedbound mother. Couldn't she be given another chance?" At that time, I was assisting the leaders in organizing the materials of expelled and cleared out members. My daughter asked me if her mother could be readmitted to the church, and my wife also kept asking if she could be readmitted. Seeing that I had never once said she could be, my wife accused me of being heartless. Hearing this, I felt bad. I thought, "'Once a man and woman are married, their loving bond runs deep.' If I don't help my wife get readmitted, my conscience won't rest, and

both my wife and daughter will resent me.” Thinking of this, I spoke to the leaders, saying, “Ever since she was expelled, my wife has resolutely continued to believe in God. Could she be readmitted to the church?” The leaders fellowshiped with me, saying, “The church has principles for readmitting people. Only those who have continued to preach the gospel and shown true repentance after being expelled or cleared out can be readmitted. Those readmitted must absolutely not cause disturbance to the church again. Measuring by these principles, although your wife has not opposed your faith and has shown some good behavior since her expulsion, she has never reflected on or recognized the evil deeds she committed that disturbed church life, and remains unconvinced and dissatisfied about her expulsion. She is not someone who should be readmitted.” Hearing the leaders’ fellowship, I felt ashamed. I knew clearly that since my wife’s expulsion, she hadn’t recognized her past evil deeds at all, and even continued to resent the leader who expelled her, and she had never reflected on herself to turn things around despite others fellowshiping with her. She always argued by her own warped logic. Having lived with her for so many years, I understood well what kind of person she was. She was particularly arrogant, conceited, and insistently unreasonable. Since we married, no matter what happened, she never once admitted she was wrong. It was only when I spoke kind words to her that she would calm down. I quieted my mind and reflected on myself, thinking, “I clearly know that my wife doesn’t meet the conditions for readmission, but why do I still defend her and speak up for her?”

Later, during my devotionals, I read two passages of God’s words. Almighty God says: **“Some people place great stock in feelings, they react to whatever happens to them based on their feelings; in their hearts, they know full well this is wrong, and yet are still incapable of**

being objective, much less of acting according to principle. When people are always constrained by feelings, are they capable of practicing the truth? This is extremely difficult! Many people's inability to practice the truth comes down to feelings; they regard feelings as especially important, they put them in the first place. Are they people who love the truth? Certainly not. What are feelings, in essence? They are a kind of corrupt disposition. The manifestations of feelings can be described using several words: favoritism, unprincipled protection of others, maintenance of physical relationships, and partiality; these are what feelings are" (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. What Is the Truth Reality?). **"What issues relate to feelings? First is how you evaluate your own family members, and how you approach the things they do. 'The things they do' here naturally include when they disrupt and disturb the church's work, when they pass judgment on people behind their backs, when they engage in some of the practices of disbelievers, and so on. Can you approach these things impartially? When it is necessary for you to write an evaluation of your family members, can you do so objectively and impartially, putting your own feelings aside? This relates to how you approach your family members. Furthermore, do you harbor feelings toward those who you get along with or who previously helped you? Are you able to view their actions and comportment in an objective, impartial, and accurate way? If they disrupt and disturb the work of the church, will you be able to promptly report or expose them after you find out about it? Also, do you harbor feelings toward those who are relatively close to you, or who share similar interests with you? Do you possess an impartial and objective evaluation, definition, and way of dealing with their actions and behavior? Suppose that these people, who you have a**

sentimental connection with, are handled by the church according to the principles, and the outcome of this isn't in line with your own notions—how would you approach this? Would you be able to obey?"

(The Word, Vol. 5. The Responsibilities of Leaders and Workers. The Responsibilities of Leaders and Workers (2)). God's words sharply exposed the root of the problem. I was constrained by my feelings. I clearly knew that my wife had disrupted and disturbed the church life and judged the leader, and that she had never truly repented even after being expelled, making her unfit for readmission by the church, but because I feared that my wife and daughter would call me heartless, and worried that our marriage would fall apart, I went against the principles to defend her. I took advantage of my duty to speak up for her, hoping to get her accepted back into the church. My feelings were too strong! The house of God required us to readmit those who had truly repented after being cleared out or expelled. This was God's tolerance and mercy, giving people the chance to repent to the greatest extent possible. If these people could abhor and regret their own actions, making up for their transgressions through real actions, it showed they had not completely lost their humanity and reason and that, at the very least, their faith in God was genuine. However, those who did not accept the truth at all and committed many evil deeds were people whose nature essence was being averse to the truth and hating the truth and they would never repent. Such people would be eliminated. I had gone against the principles, relying on my feelings, and had wanted to readmit an evil person into the church, allowing her to continue disturbing church life. In doing this, wasn't I disturbing the church's work? Realizing this, I felt deeply remorseful and unwilling to live by my feelings any longer.

Later, I read God's words: **"By what principle do God's words ask that people treat others? Love what God loves, and hate what God**

hates: This is the principle that should be adhered to. God loves those who pursue the truth and are able to follow His will; these are also the people that we should love. Those who are not able to follow God's will, who hate and rebel against God—these people are detested by God, and we should detest them, too. This is what God asks of man. ... During the Age of Grace, the Lord Jesus said, 'Who is My mother? And who are My brothers?' 'For whoever shall follow the will of My Father which is in heaven, the same is My brother, and sister, and mother.' These words already existed back in the Age of Grace, and now God's words are even more clear: 'Love what God loves, and hate what God hates.' These words cut straight to the point, yet people are often unable to grasp their true meaning. If a person is someone who denies and opposes God, who is cursed by God, but they are a parent or relative of yours, they don't appear to be an evil person as far as you can tell, and they treat you well, then you might find yourself unable to hate that person, and might even remain in close contact with them, your relationship unchanged. Hearing that God hates such people will trouble you, and you are unable to stand on the side of God and ruthlessly reject them. You're always constrained by feelings, and you cannot fully let go of them. What is the reason for this? This happens because your feelings are too strong, and they hinder you from practicing the truth. That person is good to you, so you can't bring yourself to hate them. You could only hate them if they did hurt you. Would that hatred be in line with the truth principles? Also, you're bound by traditional notions, thinking that they are a parent or relative, so if you hate them, you would be scorned by society and reviled by public opinion, condemned as unfilial, without a conscience, and not even human. You think you would suffer divine condemnation

and punishment. Even if you want to hate them, your conscience won't let you. Why does your conscience function this way? It's because a way of thinking has been sown within you since you were a child, through the inheritance of your family, the education given to you by your parents, and the indoctrination of traditional culture. This way of thinking is rooted very deeply in your heart, and it makes you mistakenly believe that filial piety is perfectly natural and justified, and that anything inherited from your ancestors is always good. You learned it first and it remains dominant, creating a great stumbling block and disturbance in your faith and acceptance of the truth, leaving you unable to put God's words into practice, and to love what God loves, hate what God hates" (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. Only by Recognizing One's Own Misguided Views Can One Truly Transform). From God's words, I understood that God requires us to treat people with the principle of loving what God loves and hating what God hates. We should treat those who love the truth and uphold the church's work with love, and we should detest and reject those evil people who hate the truth, resist God, and disturb God's work. Only practicing in this way aligns with God's intention. However, I had been constrained by my feelings and unable to love what God loves and hate what God hates. Knowing that my wife had done evil to disturb church life and that she flatly rejected the truth, and that her essence was that of an evil person who hated the truth, and that she should be expelled and eliminated, I had gone against the principles, trying to get her readmitted to the church. My feelings were too strong! I believed in sayings like "Once a man and woman are married, their loving bond runs deep," "Blood is thicker than water," and "Man is not inanimate; how can he be free from emotions?" Living by these satanic poisons, I had been unable to distinguish between good and evil, right and wrong. In

everything, I had lived by my feelings, without any principles. Seeing my wife continue to support me and our children in doing our duties, handling household chores, and taking care of my paralyzed mother after being expelled, I had felt that I owed her. If I didn't fight for her, I feared my children would be angry with me and resent me. To maintain my fleshly emotional ties and my image as a good husband and father, I had sided with her and spoken up for her, trying to get her readmitted, allowing her to continue disturbing church life and the brothers' and sisters' life entry. This was an evil deed and truly without conscience and humanity. God never asks us to show conscience toward evil people, nor does He say that rejecting satanic relatives is heartless, or inhumane. Instead, He requires us to love what He loves and hate what He hates. Realizing this, I felt much clearer in my mind, and was willing to act according to the principles, no longer defending my wife or acting based on my feelings.

After experiencing these things, I thought I had gained some insight into the essence of feelings. However, I later faced the expulsion of my elder daughter. In December 2020, I was doing my duties away from home. One day, I suddenly received a letter from home stating that my elder daughter, who had been revealed as an evil person, was expelled from the church for disrupting and disturbing church work and committing numerous evil deeds without repentance. I was stunned at that time and deeply pained, and I couldn't help but complain, "Why has my elder daughter also been expelled? At that time, she gave up her studies to do her duties. Through wind and rain, she never once delayed her duties. Now she's been expelled; doesn't this mean there's no hope for salvation?" Whenever I closed my eyes, past scenes would flash through my mind. Previously, our family of four believed in God. We often read God's words, sang hymns, and fellowshiped about the truth together. Now it was just me and my younger

daughter left. Thinking of this, I was in deep pain. I prayed to God, “Oh God! My elder daughter was expelled. I know this is Your righteousness. But I just can’t get my head around it; I can’t let go of my feelings. May You enlighten and guide me to understand Your intention.” At that time, we were filming the stage play *The Battle to Expel the Wicked*. The protagonist, who was pained and negative because of her father’s expulsion, was in a state similar to mine. Seeing that the protagonist relied on God’s words to overcome the constraint of her feelings, I was deeply moved. I thought, “I must also rely on God, practice the truth, and stand firm in my testimony. Today, knowing that my daughter was expelled, I felt sad, but I believe God is righteous. The church’s clearing out or expulsion of anyone is based on their essence, and no one is wronged. I should submit and stop complaining about and resisting God.”

Later, I calmed down to reflect on my elder daughter’s consistent behavior and reviewed her expulsion notice, confirming she indeed was an evil person who had committed many evil deeds. On the surface, she seemed rational and didn’t speak much, but when her interests were involved, her true colors were revealed. Back then, when my wife was dismissed and isolated for reflection, Wang Jing, the leader, fellowshipped with her about my wife’s evil deeds. She not only didn’t listen but defended my wife, saying, “I haven’t seen these behaviors. I don’t believe my mom disturbed church life.” No matter how the leader fellowshipped, she wouldn’t accept it and claimed her mom was suppressed and wronged by the leader, continually disturbing church life. Because of her behavior, the church dismissed her. Since then, she harbored resentment toward Wang Jing. Later, outwardly, she seemed to improve and let go of this. After some time, she was elected as a church leader. At that time, Wang Jing was reassigned to the text-based work for failing to do real work, so, my

daughter took revenge on Wang Jing. She not only dismissed her from her text-based work, but also prepared materials to have her expelled from the church. I told her at the time, “Cleansing the church must be based on principles. If someone is unjustly expelled, that is doing evil; it is a serious transgression. Wang Jing is just a false leader unable to do any real work, but she’s not an evil person and doesn’t meet the criteria for expulsion.” I fellowshiped with her many times, but she wouldn’t listen, insisting Wang Jing was an evil person and antichrist deserving expulsion. Later, her evidence against Wang Jing was insufficient, and the leaders, workers, and brothers and sisters didn’t approve. She wouldn’t give up and continued gathering information behind the scenes, determined to expel Wang Jing from the church. Not only did she want to expel Wang Jing, but she also punished and suppressed Wang Jing’s husband and child, misleading and inciting the brothers and sisters to reject and ostracize Wang Jing’s husband, and even threatened to dismiss him, causing Wang Jing’s family great pain and negativity. During the dismissal of my elder daughter, I, as a church deacon, was present, and since I didn’t defend her, she harbored resentment toward me. Later, when writing evaluations, she described me as inhumane, extremely selfish, unfeeling, like a cold-blooded animal, and gave me very poor evaluations.

Reflecting on my daughter’s behavior, I read a passage of God’s words: **“When antichrists are pruned, their attitude is not one of acceptance and obedience. Instead, they are resistant and averse to it, which generates hatred. They hate deep in their hearts everybody who prunes them, everybody who reveals the skeletons in their closet and exposes their actual circumstances. To what extent do they hate you? They grind their teeth with hatred, wish that you would disappear from their sight, and feel that the two of you cannot coexist. If antichrists are**

like this with people, then can they accept God's words which expose and condemn them? No, they can't. Whoever exposes them, they will hate just for exposing them and being unfavorable to them and they will retaliate. They wish they could make the person who pruned them get out of their sight. They cannot stand to see this person doing well. If this person died or met with disaster, they would be happy; as long as this person is alive and still doing their duty in God's house, and everything carries on as usual, they feel suffering, unease, and annoyance in their hearts. When they do not have a way to retaliate against somebody, they secretly curse them, or even pray for God to bring punishment and retribution upon that person, and for God to redress their grievances. Once antichrists have generated this hatred, this leads to a series of actions. These actions include retaliation and curses, and of course some other actions, such as framing, slandering and condemning others, which stem from hatred. If someone prunes them, they will undermine that person behind their back. When that person says something is right, they will say it is wrong. They will distort all the positive things that person does and make them negative, spreading these lies and causing disturbances behind their back. They will incite and draw in others who are ignorant and can't see through things or discern for themselves, so that these people join their side and back them up. Clearly the person pruning them has not done anything bad, but they still want to pin some misdeeds on this person, so that everyone mistakenly believes they do these kinds of things, and then get everyone to come together to reject this person. Antichrists disturb church life in this way and disturb people in the performance of their duty. What is their goal? It is to give the person pruning them a hard time and make everybody abandon this person. There are also some

antichrists who say: ‘You pruned me and gave me a hard time, so I’m not going to give you an easy time of it. I’ll give you a taste of what it’s like to be pruned and abandoned. However you treat me, I will treat you. If you don’t give me an easy time, don’t think that you’ll have an easy time either!’” (The Word, Vol. 4. Exposing Antichrists. Item Nine (Part Eight)). From God’s words, I saw that antichrists are especially vicious and malicious, particularly hating those who expose or offend them, and they won’t give up until they have beaten them down and ruined them. Comparing this to my elder daughter’s behavior, I gained some discernment of her. Because she disturbed church life by standing up for her mother, she was dismissed, and she held a grudge against the leader, Wang Jing, waiting for an opportunity to take revenge. After gaining a position, she used her power to maliciously frame and torment Wang Jing and her family. No matter how much everyone fellowshiped with her that Wang Jing didn’t meet the criteria for clearing out or expulsion, she wouldn’t listen at all, insisting on expelling Wang Jing from the church. I saw that my daughter’s disposition was extremely insidious and malicious, and that she always protected the evil person and retaliated against the dissenter, refusing to stop until she had destroyed others. I realized she was a devil and indeed should be expelled. If she remained in the church, she would only continue to disrupt and disturb, and become a scourge to the church.

Later, I read these words of God: **“You still mingle with those demons today and treat them with conscience and love, but in this case are you not extending good intentions toward Satan? Are you not in league with demons? If people have made it to this point and are still unable to distinguish between good and evil, and continue to blindly be loving and merciful without any desire to seek God’s intentions or being able in any way to take God’s intentions as their own, then their**

endings will be all the more wretched. Anyone who does not believe in the God in the flesh is an enemy of God. If you can bear conscience and love toward an enemy, do you not lack a sense of justice? If you are compatible with those which I detest and with which I disagree, and still bear love or personal feelings toward them, then are you not rebellious? Are you not intentionally resisting God? Does such a person possess truth? If people bear conscience toward enemies, love for demons, and mercy for Satan, then are they not intentionally disrupting God's work? Those people who believe only in Jesus and do not believe in God incarnate during the last days, as well as those who verbally claim to believe in God incarnate but do evil, are all antichrists, without even mentioning those who do not even believe in God. All these people will be objects of destruction" (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. God and Man Will Enter Into Rest Together). In God's family, Christ holds power, and the truth reigns. The church expelled my daughter based on her essence, following the principles for expulsion. But when this happened to me, I didn't seek God's intention. I was unable to see through my daughter's devilish essence, so I sympathized with and pitied her. I thought she had believed in God since childhood, and she gave up her studies, endured suffering and paid a price until now; how could she be expelled? So I complained to God in my heart, reasoning with Him. Wasn't this exactly what God exposed as **"extending good intentions toward Satan"** and **"in league with demons"**? Wasn't I opposing and resisting God? I had believed in God for many years, eaten and drunk so many of His words, and often told others "clearing out and expelling someone should be based on principles, not on feelings, even if it's your own parents," yet when my wife and daughter were expelled, I knowingly broke the rules, wanting to keep them in the church out of feelings, wasn't I

condoning evil people disturbing the church's work? This was standing on the side of the evil people, resisting God! Realizing this, I felt a bit fearful in my heart, so, I prayed to God, willing to repent to Him and break free from the constraint of feelings.

I then read these words of God: **“Everyone’s outcome is determined according to the essence that comes from their conduct, and it is always determined appropriately. No one can bear the sins of another; even more so, no one can receive punishment in another’s stead. This is absolute. ... In the end, doers of righteousness are doers of righteousness, and evildoers are evildoers. The righteous will eventually be allowed to survive, while the evildoers will be destroyed. The holy are holy; they are not filthy. The filthy are filthy, and not one part of them is holy. The people who will be destroyed are all the evil ones, and the ones who will survive are all the righteous—even if the children of the evil ones perform righteous deeds, and even if the parents of the righteous ones commit evil deeds. There is no relationship between a believing husband and a nonbelieving wife, and there is no relationship between believing children and nonbelieving parents; these two types of people are completely incompatible. Prior to entering into rest, one has physical relatives, but once one has entered into rest, one will no longer have any physical relatives to speak of. Those who do their duty are enemies of those who do not; those who love God and those who hate Him are in opposition to one another. Those who will enter into rest and those who will have been destroyed are two incompatible types of created beings. Created beings that fulfill their duties will be able to survive, while those that do not fulfill their duties will be objects of destruction; what is more, this shall last through eternity. ... There are physical relationships that exist between**

the people of today, as well as associations by blood, but in the future, these will all be shattered. Believers and nonbelievers are not compatible; rather, they are opposed to one another. Those in rest will believe that there is a God and will submit to God, whereas those who are rebellious against God will all have been destroyed. Families will no longer exist upon earth; how could there be parents or children or spousal relationships? The very incompatibility of belief and unbelief will have utterly severed such physical relationships!” (The Word, Vol. 1. The

Appearance and Work of God. God and Man Will Enter Into Rest Together). From God’s words, I understood that God is righteous and holy. God determines people’s outcomes without any fleshly feelings, treating everyone fairly and justly. God does not judge based on how much someone appears to have forsaken or expended themselves, but rather based on their essence and actions to decide their outcome, and evil people are destined to be eliminated. I did not understand God’s righteousness, so, when I heard that my daughter was expelled, I didn’t seek the truth or consider her nature essence to see what kind of person she really was, but instead lived in my feelings, sympathizing and pitying her. Now I saw clearly that although my daughter could give up her studies and do her duties, endure suffering, and pay a price, all her efforts were to gain status and reputation. Once she lost her position, and her interests were affected, her vicious nature was fully exposed. I used to think that our whole family believed in God, and that we could all be saved and enter the kingdom of heaven, but now I saw that this was my own notion and imagination. If one does not love the truth or even hates the truth, and their satanic disposition doesn’t change at all despite years of believing in God, how can they be saved? Through the experience of my daughter and wife being expelled, I saw that although our whole family initially believed in God, received the provision of God’s words, and

did our own duties, after a few years, everyone's essence and the path we took were gradually revealed. My wife and elder daughter committed many evil deeds and were exposed as evil people; we are two incompatible types of people, and no one can help or save the other. I thought of these words of God: **"In the future, when humanity enters the beautiful realm, there will be none of the relationships between husband and wife, between father and daughter, or between mother and son that people imagine they will find. At that time, each human will follow their own kind, and families will already have been shattered. Having completely failed, Satan will never disturb humanity again, and humans will no longer have corrupt satanic dispositions. Those rebellious people will already have been destroyed, and only the people who submit will remain. As such, very few families will survive intact; how can physical relationships continue to exist?"** (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. God and Man Will Enter Into Rest Together). I didn't understand God's work, and out of my feelings, I protected my wife and daughter, wanting to maintain our fleshly family relationships, almost committing acts of resistance against God. I was so foolish and blind! I thought, "I can no longer be constrained by my feelings. I need to break free from the bondage of feelings and submit to this situation." Gradually, my state improved, and I didn't feel as much pain.

After experiencing all this, I became more discerning about my family. I let go of my feelings toward them from the bottom of my heart. At the same time, I also saw clearly that living by feelings makes one unable to distinguish between good and evil, right and wrong, and even capable of doing things that go against the truth principles, resisting and rebelling against God. Feelings are indeed God's enemy. Living by feelings makes it impossible to practice the truth. I also saw that my stature was too small,

my feelings were too strong, I lacked true submission to God, and I needed to experience God's judgment and chastisement to transform my corrupt disposition.

53. My Duty Exposed My Selfishness

By Roxana, Taiwan

I have been a video work supervisor for over two years. A little while ago, because of the requirements of the work, our group was split into two smaller groups. Sister Layla was in charge of one group, and I was in charge of the other. Though Sister Layla had just started supervising this work, she was always putting forward key suggestions on video production, and she often led the brothers and sisters in jointly reviewing the work and learning technical skills. I wasn't too happy about that, thinking, "At this rate they're sure to make quick progress and it won't be long before my group is unfavorably compared with theirs." A sense of crisis swept over me, and I told myself I had to do a good job on every single video so as not to fall behind Layla and her group. At the time, we were making a video that was technically demanding, and I was closely studying the relevant skills along with other brothers and sisters. When we encountered difficulties, I would pray to God and seek solutions with everybody. The video was completed after much hard work, and the brothers and sisters who saw it said it was well made. This was gratifying as it suggested I was a force to be reckoned with, and was more capable than Layla and her group. I sent the video on to brothers and sisters in other groups, and a few days later they responded saying the video looked very lifelike and asking about how I improved my technical skills. I was very happy to hear this and thought to myself, "Now that the brothers and sisters have all seen what I can do, they're bound to look up to and admire me." I promised myself that I would handle all subsequent videos with utmost diligence.

After this, Layla and her group were having some difficulties with a video, and wanted me to help resolve them. I thought to myself, "This video

is your responsibility. If I spend time resolving these problems, I won't get credit for it and it'll also hold up my own work. I'd be better off putting more effort into the video I'm responsible for, rather than helping you to resolve your problems." So, I decided not to help them. Later, when Layla still couldn't find a solution, she came back to me again. She said they'd tried various approaches without success, and asked how I'd handled such difficulties in the past. I thought, "If I spend time on your group's problems and you end up doing a better job than me, isn't everyone going to think you're a better group leader than I am, even though you've only just started out? I'd look incompetent!" With this in mind, I said to her, in an offhanded way, that there was nothing I could do to help. Layla had no choice but to go back and keep on probing into the difficulties herself. She then sent a sample of the video to the group chat for us to check if there were any problems. I wasn't planning to respond, thinking that watching the video would be a waste of my time. But at the same time I worried that, if I didn't watch it, the brothers and sisters might say I was negligent in overseeing the work and irresponsible as a group leader. So, I reluctantly opened the file and watched the video. I found problems in several places, but I didn't think them over carefully. Then Layla went on to send the video to the leader, who pointed out a good number of issues, so their video needed to be reworked and fixed. Progress of the work was delayed as a result. Later on, when the leader came to go over the work with me, she pointed out my problems and said, "When we do our duties in the church, we divide up the labor, but that doesn't mean that we're working independently from one another. You're a group leader, so you have to bear more of a burden. Layla has only just started practicing as a group leader, so you have to check more closely on the videos she and her group make, so that some problems can be resolved ahead of time." I realized, then, that I couldn't wash my hands of

responsibility for this delay as it was all due to me being too selfish, only attending to my own work and refusing to cooperate with Layla. However, I didn't reflect too deeply on the matter. Whenever I was making videos after this, my thinking was hazy, and I felt dopey and disoriented. I couldn't find the problems in brothers' and sisters' duties, and I didn't even know what to say when praying. I realized that I wasn't in the right state, and that God hid His face from me. So, I came seeking and praying before God, asking Him to guide me toward an understanding of myself.

One night, before going to bed, I reflected on my recent performance. I thought about how God exposes antichrists who only care about their own work in the performance of their duties. I found this passage of God's words: **"Antichrists have no conscience, reason, or humanity. Not only are they heedless of shame, but they have another hallmark, too: They are uncommonly selfish and vile. The literal sense of their 'selfishness and vileness' is not hard to grasp: They are blind to anything but their own interests. Anything concerning their own interests gets their full attention, and they will suffer for it, pay a price, engross themselves in it, and devote themselves to it. Anything not related to their own interests they will turn a blind eye to and take no notice of; others can do as they please—antichrists don't care if anyone is being disruptive or disturbing, and to them, this has nothing to do with them. Put tactfully, they mind their own business. But it is more accurate to say that this kind of person is vile, base, and sordid; we define them as 'selfish and vile.' How does the selfishness and vileness of the antichrists manifest itself? In anything that benefits their status or reputation, they make efforts to do or say whatever is necessary, and they willingly endure any suffering. But where work arranged by God's house is concerned, or where work that benefits the life growth of**

God's chosen people is concerned, they utterly ignore it. Even when evil people disrupt, disturb, and commit all kinds of evil, thereby seriously affecting the work of the church, they remain impassive and unconcerned, as if this has nothing to do with them. And if someone discovers and reports the evil deeds of an evil person, they say they saw nothing and feign ignorance. ... Regardless of what work they undertake, antichrists never give any thought to the interests of the house of God. They only consider whether their own interests will be affected, only think about the little bit of work in front of them that benefits them. For them, the primary work of the church is just something they do in their spare time. They don't take it seriously at all. They only move when they're prodded into action, only do what they like to do, and only do work that is for the sake of maintaining their own status and power. In their eyes, any work arranged by God's house, the work of spreading the gospel, and the life entry of God's chosen people are not important. No matter what difficulties other people have in their work, what issues they have identified and reported to them, how sincere their words are, the antichrists pay no heed, they do not get involved, it's as if this has nothing to do with them. No matter how major the problems emerging in the church's work are, they are utterly indifferent. Even when a problem is right in front of them, they only address it perfunctorily. Only when they are directly pruned by the Above and ordered to sort out a problem will they grudgingly do a little real work and give the Above something to see; soon after, they will continue with their own business. When it comes to the work of the church, to the important things of the wider context, they are disinterested in and disregard these things. They even ignore the problems they discover, and they give perfunctory answers

or hem and haw when asked about problems, only addressing them with great reluctance. This is the manifestation of selfishness and vileness, is it not? What's more, no matter what duty antichrists are doing, all they think about is whether it will allow them to step into the limelight; as long as it will boost their reputation, they rack their brains to come up with a way to learn how to do it, to carry it out; all they care about is whether it will set them apart. No matter what they do or think, they are only concerned with their own fame, gain, and status. No matter what duty they are doing, they only compete over who is higher or lower, who wins and who loses, who has the bigger reputation. They only care about how many people worship and look up to them, how many people obey them, and how many followers they have. They never fellowship the truth or solve real problems. They never consider how to do things according to principle when doing their duty, nor do they reflect on whether they have been loyal, have fulfilled their responsibilities, whether there have been deviations or oversights in their work, or if any problems exist, much less do they give thought to what God asks, and what God's intentions are. They pay not the slightest attention to all these things. They only put their head down and do things for the sake of fame, gain, and status, to satisfy their own ambitions and desires. This is the manifestation of selfishness and vileness, is it not? This fully exposes how their hearts brim with their own ambitions, desires, and senseless demands; everything they do is governed by their ambitions and desires. No matter what they do, the motivation and source is their own ambitions, desires, and senseless demands. This is the archetypal manifestation of selfishness and vileness" (The Word, Vol. 4. Exposing Antichrists. Excursus Four: Summarizing the Character of Antichrists and Their Disposition Essence (Part One)). God

exposes antichrists to be extremely selfish. In matters that relate to their own interests, or ones which allow them to stand out, they work diligently and gladly, regardless of the price they have to pay or how much they have to suffer. But, if something doesn't relate to their own interests, they simply ignore it. In such cases, they will be unwilling to give it their attention, no matter how many difficulties others are facing or how great the loss is to the work of the church. Everything they do is for the sake of their own personal reputation and status, and they don't consider the interests of the church at all. I realized, then, that this was how I had been behaving. After our group was split in two, I saw that Layla was making rapid progress and bore a burden in her duty. I worried that she would surpass me, so I was unwilling to assist her when she encountered difficulties and came to me for help. I felt that this was not among my primary responsibilities, and that doing so would take up my time and energy. Not only that, but even if the video turned out well, my hard work would go unnoticed—instead, others would assume that Layla was on the same level as me, despite having only just started practicing as a group leader. In which case, I wouldn't be able to showcase myself. Then, when Layla asked me to check their video and give them suggestions, I couldn't be bothered. I didn't want to spend time and effort watching it. In the end, I did watch it—but only begrudgingly, for form's sake, because I worried that others might label me irresponsible. Because of this, the video—which contained numerous issues—had to be reworked. If I'd just put a little more effort in, I could have discovered and rectified those issues sooner. But, because I was being too selfish and only thought of my own interests, the church's work was delayed. I felt so guilty at the thought of this. The church had arranged for me to be a group leader, so I should have fulfilled my responsibilities and been attentive in resolving various difficulties and problems that the brothers and sisters encountered in

their duties. But I didn't care about God's intentions at all. All I cared about was if the videos I was responsible for were well made, and if I could get more people to admire me. When Layla ran up against difficulties, I obviously had some ideas about how to resolve them, but I didn't help at all. I even thought spitefully, "It's good that they've run up against some difficulties. If their results are poor, it'll just make me look better. The brothers and sisters will think that I'm the backbone of our group, and that they can't do without me." The way I thought and acted was truly despicable! When going back over the work later on, I heard a few sisters saying things like, "This video hasn't been done very well, and I feel somewhat negative about it. I think my caliber isn't good enough for this duty." This was upsetting to hear, and reinforced what I felt about how selfish I'd been. I'd only cared about my reputation and status. I'd been well aware that they'd just started practicing, and that they needed assistance and cooperation. But I'd just sat back, without even an ounce of love. The more I thought about it, the more I felt I was lacking in humanity. How could I have done something so despicable and wretched?

During a gathering, I heard a brother fellowship on an experience of his and found that I really benefited from it. In his fellowship, there was a passage of God's words that left a really deep impression. God's words say: **"What is the standard by which a person's actions and behavior are judged to be good or evil? It is whether or not they, in their thoughts, revelations, and actions, possess the testimony of putting the truth into practice and of living out the truth reality. If you do not have this reality or live this out, then without doubt, you are an evildoer. How does God regard evildoers? To God, your thoughts and external acts do not bear testimony for Him, nor do they humiliate and defeat Satan; instead, they bring shame to Him, and they are riddled with marks of**

the dishonor that you have brought upon Him. You are not testifying for God, you are not expending yourself for God, nor are you fulfilling your responsibilities and obligations to God; instead, you are acting for your own sake. What does ‘for your own sake’ mean? To be precise, it means for Satan’s sake. Therefore, in the end, God will say, ‘Depart from Me, you that work iniquity.’ In God’s eyes, your actions will not be seen as good deeds, they will be considered evil deeds. Not only will they fail to gain God’s approval—they will be condemned. What does one hope to gain from such a belief in God? Would such belief not come to naught in the end?” (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. Freedom and Liberation Can Be Gained Only by Casting Off One’s Corrupt Disposition).

From God’s words I came to understand that God doesn’t look at how many duties a person does or how much a person is praised by others. What He looks at, rather, is whether a person, in their thoughts, expressions and actions, possesses the testimony of practicing the truth in the course of doing their duty. This is how God judges whether the things a person does are good or evil. God scrutinizes people’s hearts, and if a person is doing their duty without the intention of bearing testimony for God and satisfying God, and instead harms the work of the church for the sake of defending their own interests, then no matter how much of a price a person pays, they are still doing evil in God’s eyes. I’d always felt that I’d been conscientious and responsible in my duty, and that I wasn’t so bad. By reflecting on my own behavior in light of God’s words, however, I saw that though I tried my best and was meticulous in the work I was responsible for, behind this was hidden the intention to occupy a place within the hearts of my brothers and sisters; the intention to make people think I was the backbone of the group and that they couldn’t do without me. Even when Layla was running up against difficulties and unable to progress in her work, I wasn’t the least bit

troubled. On the contrary, I was glad she was having difficulties as I felt it would help me stand out. In doing my duty with such despicable intentions, I was doing evil and condemned by God. If I didn't repent, I would eventually be eliminated by God, even if I did lots of work and paid a great price. This thought scared me and I felt I was in grave danger. I prayed to God, resolving that I would no longer live by my corrupt disposition, and that if something similar happened to me in the future, I had to consider the work of the church as a whole and safeguard the church's interests.

Afterward, I found a path of practice in God's words. God says: **"For all who perform a duty, no matter how profound or shallow their understanding of the truth is, the simplest way to practice entering into the truth reality is to think of the interests of God's house in everything, and to let go of one's selfish desires, personal intents, motives, pride, and status. Put the interests of God's house first—this is the least one should do. If a person who performs a duty cannot even do this much, then how can they be said to be performing their duty? That is not performing one's duty. You should first think of the interests of God's house, be considerate of God's intentions, and consider the work of the church. Put these things first and foremost; only after that can you think about the stability of your status or how others regard you. Do you not feel that this becomes a little easier when you divide it into two steps and make some compromises? If you practice like this for a while, you will come to feel that satisfying God is not such a difficult thing. Furthermore, you should be able to fulfill your responsibilities, perform your obligations and duty, and set aside your selfish desires, intents, and motives; you should show consideration for God's intentions, and put the interests of God's house, the work of the church, and the duty that you are supposed to**

perform first. After experiencing this for a while, you will feel that this is a good way to comport yourself. It is living straightforwardly and honestly, and not being a base, vile person; it is living justly and honorably rather than being despicable, base, and a good-for-nothing. You will feel that this is how a person should act and the image that they should live out. Gradually, your desire to satisfy your own interests will lessen” (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. Freedom and Liberation Can Be Gained Only by Casting Off One’s Corrupt Disposition). From God’s words I saw that in order to do one’s duty well, a person must set aside their personal intentions, motives, pride and status, and must put the interests of the church first at all times. After this I consciously did my duty in accordance with God’s requirements, and stopped being selfish and despicable and considering only my own reputation and status. One time, Layla encountered a difficulty when making a video and wanted me to have a look at how to resolve it. I was somewhat reluctant and thought to myself, “I’ve not yet finished the video I’ve got on hand. Will helping resolve her issue affect the progress of my work? If I end up being unable to finish it on time, will others say I’m inefficient, despite being a group leader?” I realized I was living by my corrupt disposition again. I recalled the resolution I had made to God—that I would consider the work of the church as a whole and wouldn’t just tend to my own work—and I prayed to God, willing to rebel against the flesh, set aside my interests and diligently help Layla. I watched the video attentively, noted down the problems, then went to see Layla and her group to offer on-site guidance. Layla said that my fellowship had opened up a path for her, and I felt a great sense of peace in my heart. I’d initially thought that helping them would hold up my work, but in the end there wasn’t any delay at all. For both our groups, the work proceeded more efficiently than ever and was completed successfully

within a month. After this, when brothers and sisters asked me for help with their difficulties I no longer declined. Instead, I helped them to the best of my abilities. Though I was spending more time and effort checking on things and giving suggestions, I felt at peace practicing in this way.

Later I did some self-reflection, and I asked myself why I was so assiduous about matters that touched on my own interests, but uncooperative when my interests weren't involved. What exactly was the essence of this problem? I saw some of God's words: **"To protect their own vanity and pride, and to maintain their reputation and status, some people are happy to help others, and to sacrifice for their friends no matter the cost. But when they need to protect the interests of the house of God, the truth, and justice, their good intentions are gone, they have completely disappeared. When they should practice the truth, they do not practice it at all. What is going on? To protect their own dignity and pride, they will pay any price and endure any suffering. But when they need to do real work and handle practical affairs, to safeguard the church's work and positive things, and to protect and provide for God's chosen people, why do they no longer have the strength to pay any price and endure any suffering? That is inconceivable. Actually, they have a kind of disposition that is averse to the truth. Why do I say that their disposition is averse to the truth? Because whenever something involves bearing witness for God, practicing the truth, protecting God's chosen people, fighting against Satan's schemes, or protecting the work of the church, they flee and hide, and don't attend to any proper matters. Where is their heroism and spirit to endure suffering? Where do they apply these things? This is easy to see. Even if someone reproves them, saying that they should not be so selfish and base, and protect themselves, and that they ought**

to protect the work of the church, they don't really care. They say to themselves, 'I don't do those things, and they do not have anything to do with me. What good would acting like that be for my pursuit of fame, gain, and status?' They are not a person who pursues the truth. They only like to seek fame, gain, and status, and they do not do the work that God has entrusted to them at all. So, when they are needed to do the work of the church, they simply choose to flee. This means that, in their hearts, they do not like positive things, and are not interested in the truth. This is a clear manifestation of being averse to the truth. Only those who love the truth and possess the truth reality can come forward when required by the work of God's house and by God's chosen ones, only they can stand up, bravely and duty-bound, to testify to God and fellowship the truth, leading God's chosen ones onto the right path, enabling them to attain submission to God's work. Only this is an attitude of responsibility and a manifestation of showing consideration for God's intentions. If you do not have this attitude, and are nothing but careless in your handling of things, and you think, 'I'll do the things within the scope of my duty, but I don't care about anything else. If you ask me something, I'll answer you—if I'm in a good mood. Otherwise, I won't. This is my attitude,' then this is a type of corrupt disposition, isn't it? Only protecting one's own status, reputation, and pride, and only protecting the things that relate to one's own interests—is this protecting a just cause? Is it protecting the interests of God's house? Behind these petty, selfish motives is the disposition of being averse to the truth" (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. Part Three). "When God sees that people are of poor caliber, that they have certain failings, and have corrupt dispositions or an essence that opposes Him, He is not repulsed by them, and does not

keep them away from Him. That is not God's intention, and it is not His attitude toward man. God does not loathe people's poor caliber, He does not loathe their foolishness, and He does not loathe that they have corrupt dispositions. What is it that God most loathes in people? It is when they are averse to the truth. If you are averse to the truth, then because of that alone, God will never find delight in you. This is set in stone. If you are averse to the truth, if you do not love the truth, if your attitude toward the truth is uncaring, contemptuous, and arrogant, or even repulsed, resistant, and rejective—if this is how you behave—then God is utterly disgusted with you, and you are dead in the water, beyond saving” (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. To Fulfill One's Duty Well, Understanding the Truth Is Most Crucial). From God's words I saw that people who do not love the truth or safeguard the interests of the church, always protecting personal reputation and status and readily doing whatever serves their interests and makes them stand out while ignoring and dismissing whatever doesn't benefit them, are people of a satanic disposition that is averse to the truth. No matter how diligent this type of person is in matters touching on their own interests, how much of a price they pay or how impressive their work results, their intention is always to satisfy their need for reputation and status. When it comes to the interests of the church, they clearly know the truth but don't practice it, and they do not uphold the work of the church at all. Upon reflection, I realized I had been doing my duty in this way. I was willing to put in effort and pay a price so long as I was able to stand out and look good. Even in the face of difficulties I remained undeterred, and would just apply myself to the fullest to get results. But as soon as I saw that doing the work well wouldn't make me stand out or benefit me personally, I kept out of it. I wasn't even anxious even when seeing the church's work suffering losses. I was revealing the

satanic disposition of being averse to the truth! From all my years of faith and all the words of God I'd read, I knew in terms of doctrine that as a created being I had to fulfill my duty with all my heart, mind, and strength, and that I had to put the interests of the church first at all times. I'd often prayed to God, saying that I'd do my duty to the best of my abilities to repay His love. But when I faced a real situation, I'd chosen to satisfy my selfish desires instead of protecting the interests of the church. I'd always put my reputation and status ahead of the interests of the church. How evil of me! If I didn't deal with my satanic disposition of being averse to the truth, then I'd never achieve change in my life disposition, to say nothing of attaining salvation, no matter how many years I continued to believe in God. At this thought, I realized just how fatal this disposition of mine was. I prayed to God, asking Him to guide me in casting off the shackles of this corrupt disposition.

A little later, I read another passage of God's words: **"In the house of God, all those who pursue the truth are united before God, not divided. They all work toward a common goal: fulfilling their duty, doing the work that falls to them, acting according to the truth principles, doing as God requires, and satisfying His intentions. If your goal is not for the sake of this, but for your own sake, for the sake of satisfying your selfish desires, then that is the revelation of a corrupt satanic disposition. In God's house, duties are done according to the truth principles, while nonbelievers' actions are governed by their satanic dispositions. These are two very different paths. Nonbelievers keep their own counsel, each with their own aims and plans, everyone living for their own interests. That is why they all scramble for their own benefit and are unwilling to give up an inch of what they gain. They are divided, not united, because they are not out for a common goal. The**

intention and nature behind what they do is the same. They are all out for themselves. There is no truth that reigns in that; what does reign and is in charge in that is a corrupt satanic disposition. They are controlled by their corrupt satanic disposition and cannot help themselves, and so they fall deeper and deeper into sin. In God's house, if the principles, methods, motivation, and starting point of your actions were no different from those of the nonbelievers, if you were also toyed with, controlled, and manipulated by a corrupt satanic disposition, and if the starting point of your actions were your own interests, reputation, pride, and status, then you would perform your duty no differently from the way nonbelievers do things. If you pursue the truth, you should change the way that you do things. You should abandon your own interests and your personal intentions and desires. You should first fellowship together on the truth when you do things, and understand God's intentions and requirements before you divide the labor among you, with an eye on who is good and bad at what. You should take on what you are able to do and hold fast to your duty. Do not struggle or snatch at things. You must learn to compromise and to be tolerant. If someone has just begun performing a duty or only just learned the skills for a field, but is not up to some tasks, you must not force them. You must assign them tasks that are slightly easier. This makes it easier for them to achieve results in performing their duty. That is what it is to be tolerant, patient, and principled. It is a part of what normal humanity ought to have; it is what God requires of people and what people should practice" (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. Part Three). God's words made me understand how different it is doing a duty in the church compared with the way that nonbelievers do things. In the world of nonbelievers, people interact in line with satanic

philosophies for worldly dealings like “Let things drift if they do not affect one personally,” and “Let every man skin his own skunk.” They only consider their own interests and whether there is promotion or wealth to be gained. Nobody shows any interest in or concern for the difficulties of others. In considering how I’d been behaving in my duty, I realized I was acting exactly like a nonbeliever. I was well aware of the fact that Layla had just started practicing and that she was having difficulties in her duty, but I was afraid of being delayed and of being surpassed by her, so I was unwilling to help. As a result, not only did the reworking of the video delay progress, but I was also living with a corrupt disposition, loathed by God and lacking His guidance in my duty. This allowed me to see that God’s disposition is righteous, that God scrutinizes us to the depths of our hearts, that God sees with absolute clarity our selfish intentions in doing our duties, and that we are unable to attain the work of the Holy Spirit if we harbor wrongful intentions in our duties. From God’s words I came to understand that in the church we are doing a duty rather than handling our own affairs, and we can’t carry out our personal enterprise based on a corrupt disposition. No matter what, we have to practice the truth and stand up for the church’s interests, and mutually help and support our brothers and sisters, in order for the work of the church to progress smoothly. I’d enjoyed the watering and sustenance of so many of God’s words, and the church had cultivated me over such a long period. If I was still scheming for myself, satisfying my selfish desires while being incapable of doing my duty well to repay God’s love, then I was truly devoid of conscience and unworthy of all that God had bestowed upon me, much less of living before God. This realization filled me with remorse. I shouldn’t have treated my duty like that and I needed to turn myself around as soon as possible. In dealing with issues in the future, so long as it was church work, I needed to uphold it and

fulfill my responsibilities, regardless of whether the work was within my remit or would make me look good. After this, I would never again decline whenever brothers and sisters encountered difficulties and needed my help, and I'd be able to tell them of some good paths that I had summarized. In doing my duty this way, I felt at ease and at peace.

54. Being Grounded Brings Peace

By Hailey, Japan

When I began working in watering newcomers in the church in 2017, I rushed to study and gain knowledge of all the relevant truth principles so that I could be competent in my work as soon as possible. I put in a lot of work and paid a great price in my duty, and so I got better and better results. After around one year, I was selected to serve as a group leader. The brothers and sisters all said that rapid progress was made after I became group leader and they would all come to me for fellowship when they had issues. I thought to myself, “It seems like everyone really approves of me. As long as I keep pursuing the truth, I’ll certainly have a chance at being promoted to an even higher position later on. Everyone will really look up to me then.”

Not long after that, the supervisor for our group was dismissed for not doing real work. I thought to myself, “I’ve always been very proactive in my duty, I’ve been able to resolve some of the brothers and sisters’ problems and difficulties and I’ve been effective in my work. Now that I’m a group leader and we’ll soon be selecting a new supervisor, I’ll certainly be the top choice. This is a great chance to distinguish myself!” But only a few days later, our leader transferred a sister from another church to be our supervisor, saying that she had good caliber, pursued the truth and was worthy of being cultivated. I was really disappointed when I heard this news. I thought, “So this sister is a good candidate for cultivation and I’m not?” However, it then occurred to me that if the sister really could do real work, this was a positive outcome. After I realized that, I was more able to submit. Later on, when the sister was reassigned to another duty due to certain needs of the church’s work, I got very excited and thought, “They’ll

certainly consider me for the supervisor position this time around.” But only a few days later, our leader promoted Sister Adele to the supervisor role. This time I didn’t take the news with such equanimity. I thought, “I work really hard in my duty and am able to resolve some actual issues. Why didn’t the leader promote me? Does he think I’m not fit to be cultivated? Does he think little of me? What will the brothers and sisters think of me now that I’ve been passed over for promotion twice? Adele has just been transferred here and often comes to me for suggestions because she hasn’t gotten the hang of the work yet, and yet our leader regards her highly and is cultivating her.” I felt so frustrated and wronged when all this occurred to me. Later, when Adele sought me out to get up to speed with the work and asked too many questions, I became impatient. I thought, “Aren’t you the supervisor? Your caliber can’t be all that good if you keep asking questions I’ve already answered!” Sometimes when brothers and sisters came to Adele with questions and difficulties regarding watering newcomers that she hadn’t dealt with before, she wouldn’t know how to fellowship and resolve them, and would ask for my help. I would intentionally reply, “This is a simple issue. You just have to identify the crux of the problem and fellowship the truth regarding it clearly.” I would then give examples of how I had resolved similar issues. I thought, “I’ve got to show everyone that I’ve got talent. It’s not that I lack the skill but it’s that I haven’t been given the opportunity to be the supervisor.” Later on, Adele suggested that we move in together so that she could consult me whenever any issues came up. I thought, “Consult me whenever issues come up? But then you’ll get all the credit when the issue’s resolved, not me. Why should I be your behind-the-scenes helper?” After this occurred to me, I turned her down on the grounds that “I didn’t have time to spare due to my busy schedule watering newcomers.” Adele asked me again on several occasions, but I

never agreed. Gradually, I noticed that Adele seemed to be a bit constrained by me and had become a bit passive about discussing work. However, I didn't reflect on and come to know myself, instead just thinking that Adele was having a hard time serving as supervisor. What's more, I thought, if I actively partnered with her, and her state improved and she got back on track with her work, I wouldn't have any chance at being promoted. On the contrary, when she sank into negativity, it would further highlight my own enthusiasm and initiative. So, when we were discussing work, I would be very proactive and enthusiastic and would take on a leading role to distinguish myself.

Later on, because more and more people were accepting God's work in the last days and a few more waterers were assigned to our group, Adele had me spend more time helping the newly arrived brothers and sisters. I would use these opportunities to tell people about how I sought the truth to resolve newcomers' notions and confusions, systematically outlining my personal experience and paths of practice for them. After that, whenever the brothers and sisters had issues, they would seek me out for discussion. In some cases, people would even come to me with problems that Adele herself couldn't resolve. I was feeling very happy with myself, and thought, "Looks like all my work these days is paying off and everyone approves of me. I might not be a supervisor, but I can handle much of a supervisor's work. Next time there's an election for workers and leaders, the brothers and sisters will certainly vote for me."

Not long after that, it was time for the annual election and I was feeling really excited. I thought, "If I'm selected as a leader, I'll have the power to make decisions on church projects. If the work progresses under my supervision, the brothers and sisters will certainly think I'm worthy of my position and will respect me even more." But to my great surprise, when

the results were announced, my name wasn't called. My face went flush and I felt incredibly embarrassed. To add insult to injury, the brothers and sisters said I had an arrogant disposition, often constrained people, didn't prioritize life entry, rarely reflected on myself, gained knowledge or learned lessons from things; in short, I didn't pursue the truth. When I heard all that, I felt just awful—now all the brothers and sisters knew I didn't pursue the truth. Not only had I failed to distinguish myself, I'd completely embarrassed myself. During those days I was afraid that the brothers and sisters would ask me what I had taken from that situation, but I also worried that no one would speak to me, that they'd gain discernment of me and avoid me. My emotions were all over the place and all I could think of was what had happened. I couldn't apply myself to my duty and I felt terribly agonized and tormented. I kept wondering why I was faced with this kind of ordeal. Later on, some brothers and sisters fellowshipped with me and urged me to spend more time reflecting on my performance in my duty. They also pointed out that despite having some abilities in my work, I didn't prioritize pursuing the truth, only sought reputation and status and was walking the wrong path. I knew that the brothers and sisters' advice and help derived from God and so I came before Him in prayer, "Oh God, being revealed like this has been very hard for me. Dear God, please enlighten me and allow me to gain knowledge of myself and understand Your intention."

One day, while reading God's words, I came across a couple of passages in which God exposes how antichrists seek reputation and status. God's words say: **"No matter what duty the antichrists do, they will try to put themselves in a high position, in a position of primacy. They could never be content with their place as an ordinary follower. And what are they most passionate about? It is standing in front of people giving orders and telling people off, making people do as they say. They**

never think about how to do their duty properly—much less, while doing their duty, do they seek the truth principles in order to practice the truth and satisfy God. Instead, they rack their brains for ways to distinguish themselves, to make the leaders think highly of them and promote them, so that they themselves can become a leader or worker, and can lead other people. This is what they spend all day thinking about and hoping for. Antichrists are not willing to be led by others, nor are they willing to be an ordinary follower, much less to go quietly about doing their duty without fanfare. Whatever their duty, if they cannot be front and center, if they cannot be above others and lead other people, they find doing their duty boring, and become negative and start slacking. Without the praise or worship of others, it is even less interesting to them, and they have even less desire to do their duty. But if they can be front and center while doing their duty and get to have the final say, they feel fortified, and will suffer any hardship. They always have personal intentions in the performance of their duty, and they always want to distinguish themselves as a means to satisfy their need to beat other people, and satisfy their desires and ambitions” (The Word, Vol. 4. Exposing Antichrists. Item Nine (Part Seven)). “For antichrists, reputation and status are not some additional requirement, much less something extraneous that they could do without. They are part of the nature of antichrists, they are in their bones, in their blood, they are innate to them. Antichrists are not indifferent toward whether they possess reputation and status; this is not their attitude. Then, what is their attitude? Reputation and status are intimately connected to their daily lives, to their daily state, to what they pursue on a daily basis. And so for antichrists, status and reputation are their life. No matter how they live, no matter what environment they live in, no matter what work

they do, no matter what they pursue, what their goals are, what their life's direction is, it all revolves around having a good reputation and a high status. And this aim does not change; they can never put aside such things. This is the true face of antichrists, and their essence. You could put them in a primeval forest deep in the mountains, and still they would not put aside their pursuit of reputation and status. You can put them among any group of people, and all they can think about is still reputation and status. Although antichrists also believe in God, they see the pursuit of reputation and status as equivalent to faith in God and give it equal weight. Which is to say, as they walk the path of faith in God, they also pursue their own reputation and status. It can be said that in antichrists' hearts, they believe that pursuit of the truth in their faith in God is the pursuit of reputation and status; the pursuit of reputation and status is also the pursuit of the truth, and to gain reputation and status is to gain the truth and life. If they feel that they have no reputation, gains, or status, that no one admires them, or esteems them, or follows them, then they are very disappointed, they believe there is no point in believing in God, no value to it, and they say to themselves, 'Is such faith in god a failure? Is it hopeless?' They often deliberate such things in their hearts, they deliberate how they can carve a place out for themselves in the house of God, how they can have a lofty reputation in the church, so that people listen when they talk, and support them when they act, and follow them wherever they go; so that they have the final say in the church, and fame, gain, and status—they really focus on such things in their hearts. These are what such people pursue” (The Word, Vol. 4. Exposing Antichrists. Item Nine (Part Three)). God's words expose how antichrists place paramount importance on reputation and status. No matter when and where, it is their ultimate goal to attain a

good reputation and high status. They only believe in God and do their duties in order to distinguish themselves and gain the respect of others. They are always striving to attain positions of status, to win the final say and decision-making power and to gain authority over others. If they are unable to gain status and reputation, they begin to think believing in God is meaningless and there's no reason to do their duty. Considering God's words, I realized that the disposition I revealed and my view on pursuit were no different than an antichrist's. I was always striving to become a supervisor or leader, because I thought that leaders and workers had the final say, could make important decisions and were highly respected, supported and esteemed. As a group leader, the scope of my authority was limited and I rarely got to distinguish myself, so whenever I got results in my work, I'd have a sudden urge to gain even more power and authority so that even more people would respect me and gather round me. When I heard that the church would be selecting a new supervisor, I really looked forward to the election because I thought my chance to distinguish myself had finally arrived. But then, when the leader just transferred in a supervisor from another church, I was deeply disappointed and refused to accept this result, believing that the leader didn't want to give me a chance to train and had something against me. To prove that I was better than the current supervisor, I intentionally made things hard for her and excluded her, which caused her to become constrained. In order to make sure I was elected as a supervisor, I used every opportunity of helping brothers and sisters to show off and establish myself, so that more people would approve of me and vote for me in the next election. All I sought was status and reputation and everything I did was all in order to attain status. I was walking the path of an antichrist. Realizing this, I felt terribly regretful, and so I prayed to God, "Oh God, I haven't been pursuing the truth in my duty, I

vey for status and reputation and have rebelled against and resisted You. Dear God, I am no longer willing to continue in this way and am ready to repent. Please enlighten me so that I may come to know myself.”

One time, during devotionals, I came across this passage of God’s words: **“When a satanic disposition has taken root in people and become their nature, this is enough to plant darkness and evil in their hearts, and to lead them to pursue and choose the wrong path. Under the driving force of a corrupt satanic disposition, what are people’s ideals, hopes, ambitions, and life goals and directions? Do they not run contrary to positive things? For example, people always want to have renown or be celebrities; they wish to gain great fame and prestige, and to bring honor to their ancestors. Are these positive things? These are not at all in line with positive things; moreover, they run counter to the law of God’s sovereignty over the fate of mankind. ... Do you always want to spread your wings and take flight, do you always wish to fly solo, to be an eagle rather than a little bird? What disposition is this? Is this the principle of human conduct? Your pursuit of human conduct should be based on God’s words; only God’s words are the truth. You have been too deeply corrupted by Satan, and always take traditional culture—the words of Satan—as the truth, as the object of your pursuit, which makes it easy for you to take the wrong path, to walk the path of resisting God. The thoughts and views of corrupt mankind, and the things they strive for are contrary to the desires of God, to the truth, and to the laws of God’s sovereignty over everything, His orchestration of everything, and His control over mankind’s fate. So no matter how proper and reasonable this kind of pursuit is according to human thoughts and notions, from God’s perspective they are not positive things, and they are not in line with His intentions. Because**

you go against the fact of God's sovereignty over mankind's fate, and because you wish to go solo, taking your fate into your own hands, you are always hitting walls, so hard that blood flows from your head, and nothing ever works out for you. Why does nothing work out for you? Because the laws that God established are inalterable by any created being. God's authority and power are above all else, inviolable by any created being. People think far too much of their abilities. What is it that makes people always wish to be free of God's sovereignty, and always wish to grab hold of their own fate and plan their own future, and wish to control their prospects, direction, and life goals? Where does this starting point come from? (A corrupt satanic disposition.) What then does a corrupt satanic disposition bring to people? (Opposition to God.) What comes of people opposing God? (Pain.) Pain? It is destruction! Pain isn't the half of it. What you see right before your eyes is pain, negativity, and weakness, and it is resistance and complaints—what outcome will these things bring? Annihilation! This is no small matter, and it is no game" (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. A Corrupt Disposition Can Only Be Resolved by Accepting the Truth). Through the exposure of God's words, I realized that after man is corrupted by Satan, his life is governed by a satanic corrupt disposition characterized by arrogance and conceit, and wickedness and deceitfulness. He can no longer submit to God's sovereignty and arrangements, and is always filled with ambition and desire, striving to become a great, famous person and seeking to attain high status and become the greatest of men. Satanic philosophies such as "Man struggles upward; water flows downward" and "A soldier who doesn't want to be a general is not a good soldier" had taken root in my heart long ago, leading me to view seeking reputation and status as a legitimate goal. In school, I strived to be the top student and if I didn't

perform well on tests, I would be depressed for several days after. When I entered the workforce after graduating, I worked diligently to become one of the best employees—I would volunteer to work overtime and select the hardest jobs to win the favor of my boss and earn a chance at being promoted. Once I entered the faith, I believed that I could gain the respect and support of others by becoming a supervisor or leader in the church, and so I strived to attain high status. Especially when I became a group leader and gained the approval of my brothers and sisters, my ambition and desire reached new heights. I became increasingly arrogant, thinking I had the capital and the qualifications to be promoted as a supervisor, or even a leader. When my leader promoted Adele over me, I felt resistant and resentful and was unwilling to support and cooperate with her in our work. I was also always trying to compete with her. I would often seize on chances to show off how I was able to resolve issues—on the one hand I wanted to make Adele think she wasn't on my level, on the other hand I was trying to show the brothers and sisters that I was more talented than her. In this way, I hoped that everyone would come to me when they had issues and would think of me first if another election was held. I considered status to be more important than anything else and I never reflected on myself even as I met with repeated setbacks. What's more, I was resentful and indignant, thinking that I had capital because I was able to perform some work well and should be made a leader of others. I was unbelievably arrogant and shameless! Reflecting on this, I realized that I only believed in God in order to seek status. I didn't prioritize pursuing the truth and had very little of the truth reality—as such, I just wouldn't be able to do any substantial work that leaders and workers must perform. I also had poor humanity, which made me even less qualified to be a leader. If I had been elected as leader, it would have harmed both the brothers and sisters and the church!

After that, I read another two passages of God's words that helped me better understand the nature and consequences of pursuing reputation and status. God's words say: **"If someone says they love the truth and that they pursue the truth, but in essence, the goal they pursue is to distinguish themselves, to show off, to make people think highly of them, to achieve their own interests, and the performing of their duty is not to submit to or satisfy God, and instead is to achieve fame, gain, and status, then their pursuit is illegitimate. That being the case, when it comes to the work of the church, are their actions an obstacle, or do they help move it forward? They are clearly an obstacle; they do not move it forward. Some people wave the banner of doing the work of the church yet pursue their own personal fame, gain, and status, run their own operation, create their own little group, their own little kingdom—is this kind of person doing their duty? All the work they do essentially disrupts, disturbs, and impairs the work of the church. What is the consequence of their pursuit of fame, gain, and status? First, this affects how God's chosen people eat and drink God's word normally and understand the truth, it hinders their life entry, stops them from entering the right track of faith in God, and leads them onto the wrong path—which harms the chosen ones, and brings them to ruin. And what does it ultimately do to the work of the church? It is disturbance, impairment, and dismantlement. This is the consequence brought about by people's pursuit of fame, gain, and status. When they do their duty in this way, can this not be defined as walking the path of an antichrist? When God asks that people put aside fame, gain, and status, it is not that He is depriving people of the right to choose; rather, it is because, while pursuing fame, gain, and status, people disrupt and disturb the work of the church and the life entry of God's chosen**

people, and can even have an influence on more people's eating and drinking God's words, understanding the truth, and thus achieving God's salvation. This is an indisputable fact. When people pursue their own fame, gain, and status, it is certain that they will not pursue the truth and that they will not faithfully fulfill their duty. They will only speak and act for the sake of fame, gain, and status, and all the work they do, without the least exception, is for those things' sake. To behave and act in such a way is, without question, to walk the path of antichrists; it is a disruption and disturbance of God's work, and all its various consequences are hindering the spread of the kingdom gospel and the carrying out of God's will within the church. So, one may say with certainty that the path walked by those who pursue fame, gain, and status is the path of resistance against God. It is intentional resistance against Him, naysaying Him—it is to cooperate with Satan in resisting God and standing in opposition to Him. This is the nature of people's pursuit of fame, gain, and status" (The Word, Vol. 4. Exposing Antichrists. Item Nine (Part One)). "God loathes nothing more than when people pursue status, because the pursuit of status is a satanic disposition, it is a wrong path, it is born of the corruption of Satan, it is something condemned by God, and it is the very thing that God judges and purifies. God loathes nothing more than when people pursue status, and yet you still mulishly compete for status, you unfailingly cherish and protect it, always trying to take it for yourself. And in nature, is all of this not antagonistic to God? Status is not ordained for people by God; God provides people with the truth, the way, and the life, and ultimately makes them become an acceptable created being, a small and insignificant created being—not someone who has status and prestige and is revered by thousands of people. And so, no matter what

perspective it is viewed from, the pursuit of status is a dead end. No matter how reasonable your excuse for pursuing status is, this path is still the wrong one, and is not approved of by God. No matter how hard you try or how great the price you pay, if you desire status, God will not give it to you; if it's not given by God, you will fail in fighting to obtain it, and if you keep fighting there will only be one outcome: You will be revealed and eliminated, and you will meet with a dead end. You understand this, yes?" (The Word, Vol. 4. Exposing Antichrists. Item Nine (Part Three)).

Reading God's words and seeing His dissection and characterization of those that seek status and reputation, truly pierced my heart. I really hadn't realized how serious the nature and consequences of seeking status and reputation were. When people seek these things, they directly dismantle and destroy the church's work and serve as Satan's lackey. God condemns such actions. Seeking status goes against God's demands and is acting in direct opposition to Him—behaving in this way is a road to ruin! Our previous supervisor had been dismissed for not doing real work, so it was very beneficial for the church's work when Adele came in, because she was a pursuer of the truth and really prioritized seeking truth principles when things befell her, and she could do some real work. I should have supported and cooperated with her, but because I had become so obsessed with reputation and status, I couldn't accept that Adele had been appointed as the supervisor. Time and again, I refused to cooperate with her when she proposed that we discuss the work together. This left Adele feeling constrained and negative and the church work was negatively affected. Not only did I fail to reflect on myself, I didn't take responsibility for what I'd done to her, thinking that she had only become negative because she wasn't cut out for the supervisor role. I even looked forward to when she finally realized it was too much for her and quit, because then I'd be able to slide

into her position. Wasn't I obstructing and disturbing the church's work? I even exploited the opportunities of discussing work and helping brothers and sisters to distinguish myself, so they would come to me when they had issues, making Adele just a figurehead. I was acting as a lackey of Satan and disturbing and dismantling the church's work. I was doing evil and resisting God! God's words say: **"No matter how hard you try or how great the price you pay, if you desire status, God will not give it to you; if it's not given by God, you will fail in fighting to obtain it, and if you keep fighting there will only be one outcome: You will be revealed and eliminated, and you will meet with a dead end."** I realized that in seeking status, I was walking the path of resistance to God and the only outcome would be death. This filled me with fear. My seeking of status and reputation had become a serious problem and if I continued on like that, my ambition and desire would continue to swell. Who knew what evil things I would do if I were actually to attain status. If I didn't repent soon and continued on that mistaken path of pursuit, I would eventually commit some great evil and be eliminated and punished by God.

Later on, during a gathering, I saw this passage of God's words: **"As one member of created humanity, a person must keep their own position, and behave conscientiously. Dutifully guard that which is entrusted to you by the Creator. Do not act out of line, or do things beyond your range of ability or which are loathsome to God. Do not try to be great, or become a superman, or above others, nor seek to become God. This is how people should not desire to be. Seeking to become great or a superman is absurd. Seeking to become God is even more disgraceful; it is disgusting, and despicable. What is commendable, and what created beings should hold to more than anything else, is to become a true created being; this is the only goal that all people should**

pursue” (The Word, Vol. 2. On Knowing God. God Himself, the Unique I). Through God’s words I realized that men are mere created beings, and we should keep to our appointed positions and focus on our current duties. It is due to man’s ambition, desire and satanic disposition that he always desires to become an exceptional person with great status. Being appointed as a church leader is not about being granted status, but rather about doing one’s duty well according to the truth principles. No matter whether or not I had any status, I still had to behave conscientiously and keep to my duty. I made a silent resolution that no matter who was elected as leader, I would stand fast in my current position, and fulfill my responsibility conscientiously. Regardless of whether I was elected or attained high status, I would support the leader’s work and do duties properly with all the others, united in heart and mind. A few days later, when the newly elected leader came to debrief me on our work, I explained everything as specifically as possible so that the leader could get a good grasp of the work and be able to proceed efficiently. While discussing the work, I considered which way of acting would be most beneficial for our work and would bring up any good suggestions I had right away. No matter who was serving as leader, the important thing was to cooperate in doing our work and resolve any problems that cropped up. Once I started focusing on the work at hand and how to partner with everyone to do our duty in the most efficient way, I felt much more at ease.

Two months later, the leader was reassigned to another duty and in the new election, I was finally selected to serve as leader. A sister said to me, “Actually, you’ve always been a talented worker and been responsible in your duty, it’s just that previously you weren’t pursuing the truth so we just didn’t dare vote for you. Now we’ve seen how after experiencing the judgment and exposure of God’s words, you’ve become aware of your

corrupt disposition, made some changes, become steadier and calmer in your words and actions and shared more innermost and practical thoughts in your fellowship during gatherings. Even after you had just made these slight changes, everyone could see the difference and so we voted for you.” After hearing the sister’s kind words, I felt so grateful to God. It was the judgment and exposure of God’s words that helped me realize my true stature, status and identity. I am just a mere creature that has been deeply corrupted by Satan and lack any truth reality. Even if I did have talent and caliber, I was not any better than the other brothers and sisters. Gradually, my ambition and desire for status weakened and I started to behave more humbly. I didn’t gloat in self-satisfaction after being selected leader—instead, I felt the weight of my duty and a sense of responsibility. It was all through God’s salvation that I was able to make this small transformation. Thanks be to Almighty God!

55. An Awakening From Prison

By He Li, China

I am a former veteran communist party member. Our family used to be poor peasants, but the government gave us land and a new home, so I felt that I should be grateful to the communist party. Due to my being deeply influenced by the communist party's propaganda, I grew to worship the party and served as a village cadre for over thirty years. During that period, I bore great responsibilities without the slightest grudge, and I'd often be forced to neglect our family's farming operations due to my duties as a cadre. I was well-regarded for my contributions to the party and was eventually awarded the titles of "advanced cadre" and "advanced party member." After receiving these honors, I became even more loyal to the party. After entering the faith, I believed that not only should I be devout in my belief, I also needed to continue performing all my work well within the party. It was only after being arrested and persecuted twice by the CCP and eventually being permanently crippled as a result, that I, a former veteran party member, finally came to my senses.

I was just one year in faith when, in April of 2004, I was arrested by the police for hosting a gathering with brothers and sisters. Two officers took me to a local county government office and immediately began searching me. One of them said, "You'd do best to just give us an honest account. As long as you give us a clear account of your faith in Almighty God, you can continue serving as a cadre. If not, don't blame us if we go rough on you!" I thought to myself, "All I did was hold a gathering and read God's words, I didn't do anything against the law. What's more, I've been serving as a cadre for years, done my utmost for the party, and worked hard even if I didn't always attain merit. Given all that, I'm sure they won't

do anything to me.” So I responded, saying, “It’s not against the law to believe in God. I don’t care if I continue serving as a cadre or not.” One of the officers viciously hissed, “Keep being stubborn and you’ll see how we handle you!” Afterward, not only did they raid my house, they even took away my severely ill wife. They laid my “advanced party member” certificates on the ground and said, “How could you believe in God when you’re a distinguished member of the Communist Party? This is in direct opposition to the Communist Party!” That afternoon, the police separated and interrogated my wife and me. In the National Security Brigade interrogation room, the security corps squad leader aggressively barked, “Who is your church’s leader? Who are you in contact with?” Before I had time to respond, he grabbed me by the hair and slammed my head on the chair. I fell to the floor, feeling dizzy and my vision went black. Knowing that the CCP gave the police the authority to beat people with complete impunity, I felt a bit frightened and worried about what they might do to me. I called out to God, asking Him to protect me so that I may stand firm in my witness. After prayer, I recalled a passage of God’s words: **“I am your support and your shield, and all is in My hands. What, then, are you afraid of?”** (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. Utterances of Christ in the Beginning, Chapter 9). Indeed, no matter how savage the police were, they were all in God’s hands. God was my shield, so I had nothing to fear. As long as I sincerely relied on God, there was no ordeal I couldn’t survive. God’s words gave me faith and strength and the pain became less intense. After finding phone numbers of brothers and sisters with area codes from other provinces while going through my phone, the officer said, “Based on this alone, you could be looking at eight to ten years.” I thought to myself, “I’m not doing anything wrong by believing in God and I haven’t broken any laws. Based on what law should I be sentenced to eight to ten years?

No matter what sentence you slap on me, I'll never betray my brothers and sisters." Seeing that I wasn't going to say anything, the officers escorted me to the detention center.

After arriving at the detention center, I was continually interrogated by officers and pressured to sell out my brothers and sisters, but I never gave in. In May of 2004, an officer handed me an educational reform through labor notification and told me to sign it. They had trumped up a charge of "disturbing societal peace" and sentenced me to two and a half years of educational reform through labor. I was enraged and pressed the officer, "What law have I broken by believing in God? Why was I arrested? And why such a heavy sentence?" But he seemed to delight in my suffering, saying, "You still won't admit guilt? Then I guess you got off easy. Hosting a gathering is tantamount to harboring criminals and is directly in opposition to the CCP. That qualifies you as a political criminal." That night, I kept wondering why I was given such a heavy sentence just for believing in God. Even if the government prohibits communist party members from practicing religion, shouldn't an exception be made for me given I'd been a cadre for so many years and had the distinction of being an advanced member? Realizing this, I became very disappointed in the CCP and regretted serving them so dutifully in the past. The two brothers who were arrested with me were given even heavier sentences. I was furious and just couldn't understand why the CCP hated those who believed in God so much. It was just so difficult to practice our faith in China—it was no wonder that God said: **"The great red dragon persecutes God and is the enemy of God, and so, in this land, those who believe in God are thus subjected to humiliation and oppression"** (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. Is the Work of God As Simple As Man Imagines?). Only when the facts were laid out in front of me did I start to gain some awareness. I saw that the

CCP deeply hates and frantically resists God. No matter how you serve and sacrifice yourself for the party, as long as you believe in God, they won't let you off easy. They are truly God-resisting demons! At the time, a brother quietly fellowshipped with me while the officer was away, saying, "It is with God's permission that we've been arrested. This terrible ordeal is more able to perfect our faith. We must rely on God to stand firm in my witness." I realized, then, that I had been sentenced to education reform through labor with God's permission. God was using this ordeal to perfect my faith. Once I understood God's intention, I felt renewed determination and wasn't worried about my sentence any longer. If I had to serve two and a half years, then so be it! I relied on God and believed that He would give me the strength to stand firm.

In the labor camp, we were made to work like machines. Not long after arriving, an officer chided us saying, "According to the rules, you have human rights, but in reality, you have no human rights at all. Obey orders and do as you're told! Here, there's no room for argument or negotiation and you are not to make any demands or requests! You're not allowed to say you disagree, that you got a heavy sentence, or that you shouldn't be here. And don't you dare say, 'There's no freedom here,' 'Life is difficult here,' or 'Manual labor is tiring,' etc. None of the above statements are allowed. Follow orders!" In the labor camp, there was no freedom. After my first month in the camp, I was assigned to the brick factory. The temperature in the brick kiln was around 50°C (122°F). The firebricks were burning hot to the touch when first removed from the kiln and there was no way to get near them without hurting oneself. The camp officers forced us to work and made us wear soaking wet tattered cotton garments as poor protection. The brick factory used coal to fire the bricks and the entire factory was filled with smoke. As a result, we were always dirty, stinking,

and covered in soot from head to toe. They were particularly strict with believers in God. Every day, we were forced to work hard and dirty jobs for more than ten hours at a time. If our pace slowed down, the officers would yell, “Work faster, work faster!” At the end of the day, I was so tired and my back was so sore that all I could do was lie on the ground, not wanting to move. On top of that, we never got enough to eat, so I became increasingly weak, felt deprived of strength, and was often dizzy. At night, I would lie on my bed and think, “The great red dragon doesn’t treat us like humans, making us do this kind of hard labor. I’m over fifty years old, and if this keeps up, I’m not sure if I’ll be able to make it through these two and a half years of internment!” Thinking these thoughts, I’d become a bit despondent and so I’d quietly call out to God, saying, “Oh God! Life here is too hard. I’m worried that I won’t be able to withstand life here. Oh God! Please give me strength and faith so that I may live through my long time here in prison.” After prayer, it occurred to me that God’s words are my lifeblood, and I must rely on God’s words to persevere. I didn’t have any of God’s words on hand to read and I only remembered a few hymns, so I had to make sure I wouldn’t forget them. At night, I would put my blanket over my head and silently sing God’s hymns in my head, counting off the hymns I remembered on my fingers. Each time I sang the hymns, I would feel a great sense of encouragement. There is a hymn that goes: **“Faith is like a single log bridge: Those who cling abjectly to life will have difficulty in crossing it, but those who are ready to sacrifice themselves can pass over, sure of foot and worry-free”** (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. Utterances of Christ in the Beginning, Chapter 6). I realized that God was using this ordeal to perfect our faith. I believed that, with God on my side, there was no difficulty I couldn’t overcome. I also sang this hymn: “God experiences man’s suffering, and stands by them in their chastisement. He thinks of

man's life all the time. Only God loves mankind the most. He silently endures the pain of rejection, and accompanies man through tribulation" (Follow the Lamb and Sing New Songs, How Great It Is That Almighty God Has Come). The hymn was very encouraging and moving. Despite my being in jail, God was with me and so I had the faith and strength to face those two and a half years in prison head-on. No matter how difficult or tiring life was, I had to rely on God to press on. Once I'd served out my sentence, I knew I should go home and read more of God's words and practice my faith well.

In June of 2004, the weather became extremely hot. One day, I was feeling a bit dazed and dizzy, my arms and legs were sapped of strength, and as I was coming down from a more than three-foot-high stack of bricks, I suddenly lost balance and came crashing to the ground, landing flat on my back on a pile of crumbled bricks. The moment I landed, I felt a sharp pain shoot through my buttocks and left thigh. The pain was so intense that I broke out in a cold sweat, my heart began to race and I curled up in a ball, unable to stand up. When an officer noticed me lying there, he didn't bother to see if there was anything wrong with me and just yelled, "Get up and keep working!" I was in so much pain that I couldn't move and I continued to lie on the ground for another two minutes before I could catch my breath. I was scared that I'd get beaten, so I fought through the nearly unbearable pain and slowly got up from the ground to continue working. That night, I lay curled up in pain on my bed, and didn't dare make the slightest movement in my left leg, where there would be searing pain as if I had a bone fracture. It hurt so much that I couldn't sleep the whole night. At the time, no one showed any concern for me and I was overwhelmed by a feeling of desolation. I also worried, "This is a serious injury—if I really am paralyzed, how will I provide for my family in the future? ..." The more I thought about it, the worse I felt, so I called out to God with tears in my

eyes, “Oh God! I’m not sure if I can even stand up anymore. You are all that I rely on, please give me faith and strength.” After prayer, I recalled these words of God: **“The fate of man is controlled by the hands of God. You are incapable of controlling yourself: Despite man always rushing and busying himself on his own behalf, he remains incapable of controlling himself. If you could know your own prospects, if you could control your own fate, would you still be a created being?”** (The Word, Vol.

1. The Appearance and Work of God. Restoring the Normal Life of Man and Taking Him to a Wonderful Destination). Indeed, our fates are all in God’s hands. It was up to God to decide if I would become paralyzed or not, so there was no sense in worrying about it as it would only make me more upset. I was ready to put myself in God’s hands—no matter what happened and no matter if I really did become paralyzed, I would follow God to the very end! Later on, I applied for sick leave with the officers, but they rejected my application, so I had no choice but to endure the brutal pain, pressing my left hand against my left thigh and hobbling my way over to the factory. When one of the officers at the factory saw my condition, he viciously spouted, “You’re just faking an injury to get out of work! Believing in God is in opposition to the CCP and qualifies you as a political criminal. That’s a worse crime than stealing. You deserve to be tormented!” I was furious—they were tormenting and abusing me just because I believed in God. They were truly awful. I recalled the following passage of God’s words: **“Religious freedom? The legitimate rights and interests of citizens? They are all tricks for covering up sin! ... Why put up such an impenetrable obstacle to the work of God? Why employ various tricks to deceive God’s folk? Where is the true freedom and the legitimate rights and interests? Where is the fairness? Where is the comfort? Where is the warmth? Why use deceitful schemes to trick God’s people? Why use**

force to suppress the coming of God?” (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. Work and Entry (8)). **“Now is the time: Man has long since gathered all his strength, he has devoted all his efforts and paid every price for this, to tear off the hideous face of this devil and allow people, who have been blinded, and who have endured every manner of suffering and hardship, to rise up from their pain and rebel against this evil old devil”** (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. Work and Entry (8)). Through God’s words, I came to recognize the demonic essence of the CCP’s animosity toward God. The CCP claims itself to be great, glorious, and infallible, it claims to support religious freedom and legitimate rights and interests, but those are all deceptive and devilish words. Having personally experienced the CCP’s arrest and oppression, I saw how they deceive and savage people. The CCP is dark and evil—they are demons in the truest sense of the word. God’s words exposed all of this so accurately and practically! The reason the CCP so frantically arrests and brutalizes believers in God is that they want to force them into denying and betraying God, but I would never give in to them. I hated myself for being so thoroughly deceived and so blindly worshiping the CCP as some great benefactor and being grateful to them just because they had given me a bit of land. All things are created by God and the land is God’s to give as well. How could I have mistakenly attributed God’s grace to the devil Satan? It was only then that I realized that the one that I had always worshiped and been grateful to was a demon that resisted God and was actively trying to pull me down into hell!

It wasn’t until nine days later that a prison doctor got around to examining me and diagnosed me with femoral head necrosis. When I heard the diagnosis, I immediately thought, “That serious? If I really am paralyzed, won’t I be completely useless? Then my life will be over!” The

doctor just gave me a prescription for a few days of medicine, but it not only proved to be completely ineffective, I actually felt even more pain. By that time, I couldn't walk any more—when I had to use the bathroom, I would have to bend at the waist, hold on to the wall, and inch my way along with tiny steps. A trip that originally would have taken only a couple of minutes now required over half an hour. I had to rely on other inmates to bring me food, and when they forgot I'd just have to go hungry or drink a little water to curb the pangs. I would just lie on my bed, the hours creeping by at a snail's pace as I wallowed in suffering. I thought, "The medicine isn't working and they won't let me go to the hospital even though my condition is this serious. Maybe I'll just end up dying in here...." The more I thought, the worse I felt and the tears poured from my eyes. I even considered just ending my life to be done with it. Then I suddenly remembered that everything is in God's hands and I had to rely upon God! I continually called out to God and then recalled this hymn of God's words **"The Onset of Illness Is God's Love": "Do not lose heart in the face of illness, keep seeking again and again and do not give up, and God will illuminate and enlighten you. How was Job's faith? Almighty God is an all-powerful physician! To dwell in sickness is to be sick, but to dwell in the spirit is to be well"** (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. Utterances of Christ in the Beginning, Chapter 6). As I pondered over God's words, my heart was filled with strength. Yes, God is almighty, and only if I had faith in Him would I be able to witness His deeds. But in the midst of my suffering, I longed to end my life—I had no true faith in God and became Satan's laughingstock. I was truly poor in stature. For the next few days, I often prayed to God, hummed hymns, and felt encouraged and moved. Slowly, the awful pain wracking my body seemed to diminish. On the twelfth day, I was finally taken to a hospital for further examinations. Due to the serious

nature of my condition, they processed me for temporary release on bail for medical treatment. The officer accompanying me submitted a false statement, claiming I had fallen from an old chair while watching TV in a classroom. When I tried to clarify that I had actually fallen while working in the brick factory, the officer scowled and said, “You won’t get your medical release if you insist on telling that story. You’ll just have to keep suffering in prison!” I worried that if I delayed treatment any longer, I’d end up paralyzed, so I had no choice but to sign the false statement. After returning home, I went for surgery, but because treatment was delayed for too long, I ended up becoming permanently crippled.

When I first got home from the hospital, I was bedridden and immobile and I relied on my wife to spoon-feed me food and medicine. About two weeks after returning home, the county deputy party secretary came to our house and handed me two papers, coldly stating, “Your party membership has been revoked, sign here.” I thought to myself, “Good, revoke my membership! I sure don’t want to sacrifice my life for the party anymore!” With that, I resolutely signed the revocation documents. I thought back to my more than thirty years working as a village cadre. I had sung the praises of the party, loyally given my all, and extorted the hard-earned wealth of the people through various forms of deception. I worked so hard that I didn’t even have time to attend to my own family’s farming enterprise and, as a result, my wife became overworked and fell ill. Before, I had thought that as a member of the party, I should be loyal to the party. If I hadn’t experienced being arrested, oppressed, expelled from the party, and divested of my cadre position, I would have continued giving everything I had for the party. Despite having gone through some suffering and becoming crippled in my left leg, I had seen through the CCP’s God-resisting demonic essence and was no longer misled or hoodwinked by

them. I hated and abandoned the CCP with all my heart and devoted myself completely to God. This was all the result of God's love and salvation! That night, when I told my wife all that I'd realized and learned and she saw how I'd changed, she laughed and said, "Before you wanted to follow God and remain loyal to the party. Now that you're no longer a part of the CCP, we can devote all our energies to pursuing the truth and doing our duties."

During that time, my wife was forced to shoulder the burden of all of our housework. She was already carrying a very serious stomach ailment, and now on top of that, she had the added responsibility of taking care of me and doing all the housework. Sometimes she would be so fatigued that when she came to serve me meals, I would see her hands shaking. It was very upsetting to see my wife like that and I often couldn't help but cry. After four months, I still didn't have any mobility in my leg and I began to wonder if I would be permanently paralyzed. "If I really were paralyzed, how would I go on living? Wouldn't my life effectively be over?" I used to be the pillar of our household, but I became completely useless and even relied on my wife to help with going to the bathroom. I felt so sorry for my wife and had just become a burden to her—these thoughts led me to consider ending my life. When my wife would come to feed me, I wouldn't want to swallow the food, thinking I would just go hungry and starve to death. At my lowest moment, I repeatedly called out to God with tears in my eyes and said, "Oh God! I'm suffering bitterly right now. Please open up a path for me, please save me...." After praying, I recalled God's words which say: **"During these last days you must bear testimony to God. No matter how great your suffering, you should walk until the very end, and even at your last breath, still you must be faithful to God and at the mercy of God; only this is truly loving God, and only this is the strong and resounding testimony"** (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of

God. Only by Experiencing Painful Trials Can You Know the Loveliness of God). God's words gave me faith and strength and also left me feeling shamed and embarrassed. I wanted to end my life after experiencing just a little suffering—what kind of testimony was that? I thought of how when Job faced the enormous trial of losing all of his children and property and his body breaking out in boils, he still praised God's name and provided a glorious testimony despite his great suffering. Yet, I had become negative after experiencing some suffering from illness. I didn't seek God's intention; instead, I desired to just end my life. If God hadn't enlightened me just in the nick of time, I would have fallen for Satan's plot. Realizing this, my desire to end my life subsided and I resolved to follow God until my very last breath and bear witness for Him! One month later, I was suddenly able to raise my left foot again. I was so happy and excited that tears came streaming from my eyes and I continually gave thanks to God. Later on, I gradually regained the ability to walk. I never imagined that I would be able to stand back up again. This was truly all thanks to God!

In 2008, under the banner of “maintaining societal stability in preparation for the Beijing Olympics,” the CCP began suppressing the church and arresting any brothers and sisters with prior convictions. The day before the Olympics, two officers from the labor camp came to my home and told me I hadn't filled out the release forms for the labor camp and had to go with them to process the required documents. They told me the whole process wouldn't take more than three days, so I believed them and agreed to go with them. To my surprise, what was supposed to be three days turned out to be a four-month detainment. During my detainment, the officers forced me to do 12 hours of manual labor every day, in a dimly lit factory. If I didn't finish my assignments on time, I would be punished. Due to the injury I still carried in my left leg, I could only sit for about 20

minutes at a time before I'd have to stand up, otherwise, the circulation in my leg would get blocked up. I had to constantly switch postures to reduce the pain. Also, because I had to work long hours in that dimly lit environment, my eyesight began to deteriorate severely. After four months, and only after my daughter worked all her connections, I was finally released and allowed to return home. When I got back home, an officer came to our house and threateningly remarked, "We're keeping a close eye on you. If we find that you've been practicing faith again, you'll be arrested and slapped with a heavy sentence!" I thought to myself, "You damnable demons. You can control my body, but you can't control my heart. Even if I'm arrested again, I'll continue to believe in God!"

I thought back to how despite working myself to the bone for the party for over half of my life, they still inflicted permanent injury on me and left me wanting to end my life on multiple occasions. It was the words of God that gave me faith and strength, brought me back from the brink of death one step at a time, allowed me to gain discernment of the great red dragon's evil essence, and showed me how God is the source of man's life, only God can serve as man's life and only believing in God and following Him is most meaningful. The hymn **"The Most Meaningful Life"** puts it well: **"You are a created being—you should of course worship God and pursue a life of meaning. Since you are a human being, you should expend yourself for God and endure all suffering! You should gladly and assuredly accept the little suffering you are subjected to today and live a meaningful life, like Job and Peter. You are people who pursue the right path, those who seek improvement. You are people who rise up in the nation of the great red dragon, those whom God calls righteous. Is that not the most meaningful life?"** (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. Practice (2)).

56. God's Word Conquers All Lies

By Ye Qiu, China

In June 2022, I was elected to be the watering deacon and was watering newcomers together with Sister Cheng Lin. Having just accepted God's work of the last days, the new believers still had a lot of religious notions. I was afraid my fellowship would be unclear and their problems wouldn't be solved, so I asked the leader beforehand to find some passages of God's words with me about their notions. On the day of the gathering, as I fellowshiped on the words of God I'd prepared in advance about the new believers' notions, their notions were resolved. When we were about to wrap up, Cheng Lin asked me, "Your responses to the newcomers' questions were really detailed today. Did you fellowship with the leader in advance?" Hearing this, my mind started racing. Since I was new to that duty, did she suspect today's performance didn't reflect my true level? If I told her that I'd gotten most of my fellowship from the leader, would she still look up to me? Wouldn't she think that I wasn't a capable worker? I thought to myself that I couldn't tell her the truth. So, I said, "No." As soon as I said that, I felt like I'd gone against my conscience. Clearly, the leader and I had already fellowshiped on this, but I looked her in the eye and said no. Wasn't I knowingly lying? If the leader came by someday and Cheng Lin asked about it, my lie would be exposed—how humiliating! Everyone would say to me that I was really deceitful. I felt more uneasy the more I thought about it. That night I lay in bed, sleeping fitfully. The next day I went to find Cheng Lin, ready to open up and lay bare myself to her, but the words got to the tip of my tongue, and I just couldn't get them out. I was afraid that Cheng Lin would look down on me if I told her, and think I was unskilled, overly focused on reputation and status. She might say I was

truly deceitful to lie over such a small thing. I didn't say anything after considering all that. I thought of God's words on the way home: **"You ought to know that God likes those who are honest"** (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. Three Admonitions). I felt even guiltier. I couldn't say just one honest thing. How could I be an honest person that God likes? I felt like a great weight was crushing my heart—I felt awful. I asked myself: I know very well that God hates deceitful liars, so why is it so hard to tell the truth?

While reflecting, it occurred to me that I hadn't just lied about one thing. I was often the same way with other things. Once, the leader asked us how many newcomers we could water each month. I was new to the duty and didn't fully understand the principles for it, so I couldn't take on very many. But if I told the truth, I was afraid the leader would say I was lacking, and wasn't up to the job. So, I inflated my number a little bit. My number was high enough, but I still wasn't at ease. I was afraid that later, it would be so embarrassing if I couldn't water that many newcomers, delaying their life entry. But I'd already said it, and I was embarrassed to be open with the leader. I had to bite the bullet and keep on going. And a few days before, the leader asked me how long it had taken me to resolve a newcomer's problem. I hadn't fully understood that newcomer's notion at first, so I'd fellowshiped quite a few times. When the leader asked about it, I was afraid if I told the truth, the leader would say I was lacking caliber. Such a small issue needing multiple fellowships might make me look unskilled and inefficient. To protect my image, I lied and said it was resolved with one fellowship. I felt unsettled afterward, afraid that one day I would be revealed. Looking back on my behavior, I saw I lied a lot in my efforts to protect my image and give people a good impression. I was living in darkness and pain, so far from God's standards of being an honest person. I

thought about how the brothers and sisters were all practicing being honest people and resolving their deceitful natures. Some had even written experiential testimony articles. But after years in the faith, I was still lying so much, totally lacking in honesty. If I kept on that way in my faith, I was sure to be eliminated by God. I quickly said a prayer, “God, I’ve believed in You for years. Even now, I still lie and cheat when my interests are involved, which disgusts You. I don’t want to continue this way. Please guide me to resolve my lying problem.”

There was a passage I read in my spiritual devotion: **“In their everyday lives, people often talk nonsense, tell lies, and say things that are ignorant, foolish, and defensive. Most of these things are said for the sake of vanity and pride, to satisfy their own egos. Speaking such falsehoods reveals their corrupt dispositions. If you were to resolve these corrupt elements, your heart would be purified, and you would gradually become purer and more honest. In reality, people all know why they lie. For the sake of personal gain and pride, or for vanity and status, they try to compete with others and pass themselves off as something that they’re not. However, their lies are eventually revealed and exposed by others, and they end up losing face, as well as their dignity and character. This is all caused by an excessive amount of lies. Your lies have become too numerous. Every word you say is adulterated and insincere, and not a single one can be considered true or honest. Even though you don’t feel that you’ve lost face when you tell lies, deep down, you feel disgraced. Your conscience blames you, and you hold a low opinion of yourself, thinking, ‘Why am I living such a pitiful life? Is it so difficult to speak the truth? Must I resort to lies for the sake of my pride? Why is my life so exhausting?’ You don’t have to live an exhausting life. If you can practice being an honest**

person, you will be able to live a relaxed, free, and liberated life. However, you have chosen to uphold your pride and vanity by telling lies. Consequently, you live a tiresome and miserable existence, which is self-inflicted. One may gain a sense of pride by telling lies, but what is that sense of pride? It is just an empty thing, and it is completely worthless. Telling lies means selling out one's character and dignity. It strips away one's dignity and one's character; it displeases God, and He detests it. Is this worthwhile? It is not. Is this the correct path? No, it is not. People who frequently lie live according to their satanic dispositions; they live under Satan's power. They do not live in the light, nor do they live in the presence of God. You constantly think about how to lie and then after you lie, you have to think about how to cover up that lie. And when you do not cover up the lie well enough and it is exposed, you have to rack your brain to try and straighten out the contradictions and make it plausible. Is it not tiring to live in this way? Exhausting. Is it worth it? No, it is not worth it. Racking one's brain to tell lies and then to cover them up, all for the sake of pride, vanity, and status, what meaning is there in that? Finally, you reflect and think to yourself, 'What's the point? It's too exhausting to tell lies and to have to cover them up. Conducting myself in this manner won't work; it'd be easier if I just became an honest person.' You desire to become an honest person, but you cannot let go of your pride, vanity, and personal interests. Therefore, you can only resort to telling lies to uphold these things. ... If you think that lies can uphold the reputation, status, vanity, and pride you desire, you are completely mistaken. In reality, by telling lies, not only do you fail to maintain your vanity and pride, and your dignity and character, more grievously, you miss the opportunity to practice the truth and be an honest person. Even if you manage to

protect your reputation, status, vanity, and pride at that moment, you have sacrificed the truth and betrayed God. This means you have completely lost your chance for Him to save and perfect you, which is the greatest loss and a lifelong regret” (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. Only an Honest Person Can Live Out True Human Likeness). All of God’s words described my actual state. I was always lying and deceiving to protect my vanity and pride. I was putting on a show, which was an exhausting way to live that left me miserable. When I first started watering new believers, Cheng Lin saw my fellowship was not bad and asked me if I’d fellowshiped with the leader in advance. That was a really normal question. I could have answered with a simple “Yes.” But I was afraid she’d look down on me if I told the truth. With my reputation in mind, I knowingly told a lie. Also, when the leader asked us how many newcomers we could water, I didn’t answer based on my actual stature. I was afraid the leader would say I was incompetent if I gave a low number, so I intentionally inflated it. Then I was worried I wouldn’t be able to handle it—doing my duty this way was so stressful and exhausting. I was that way with watering new believers, too. With my shallow understanding of the truth, I needed multiple fellowships to resolve the newcomer’s issue. But I was thinking about what the leader would think of me, so I said it only took me one fellowship. I’d lied and deceived time after time to protect my vanity and pride, so others would approve of me. I was so deceitful and hypocritical! I thought if I didn’t tell the truth, the others and the leader wouldn’t know my true skill level, and I could protect my image. But God scrutinizes all. I can fool other people, but never God. After a while, everyone would gain discernment over me. They’d see I was someone who lacked the truth reality and constantly lied. I actually felt terrible after telling a lie. I was afraid of the day my lie would be exposed and I’d be

shown for what I was. Not only would I lose face, but the others definitely wouldn't trust me anymore. Over the long term, the worrying and unease tormented me. It was exhausting. I was in darkness and pain. By continually lying and cheating, not practicing the truth or being an honest person, not only did my own life suffer losses, but I was living without any character or dignity, which disgusts God. I thought of what the Lord Jesus said: **“Let your communication be, Yes, yes; No, no: for whatever is more than these comes of evil”** (Matthew 5:37). **“You are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father you will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and stayed not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it”** (John 8:44). God likes honest people and hates the deceitful. I should have spoken and acted according to God's words, calling a spade a spade. Yes means yes, and no means no. But I lied over and over again in order to protect my own image. How is that different from the devil, Satan? The devil always lies—it never has anything truthful to say. Even up to now I've also lied quite a bit. If I didn't repent, I was sure to be eliminated by God. I'd been racking my brains for my lies and false fronts to protect my image and enjoy some immediate gains. But as a result, God was disgusted, people were repelled, and I was suffering. I was idiotic.

I kept on self-reflecting, and one day, I read something in God's words: **“When people engage in deceit, what intentions does this come from? What aim are they trying to achieve? Without exception, it is to achieve fame, gain, and status; in a nutshell, it is for the sake of their own interests. And what lies at the root of the pursuit of self-interest? It is that people see their own interests as being more important than everything else. They engage in deceit in order to benefit themselves, and their deceitful disposition is thereby revealed. How should this**

problem be resolved? First you must discern and know what interests are, what they bring to people exactly, and what the consequences of pursuing them are. If you can't figure this out, then forsaking them will be easier said than done. If people don't understand the truth, then nothing is harder for them to give up than their own interests. That's because their life philosophies are 'Every man for himself and the devil take the hindmost' and 'Man dies for wealth as birds do for food.' Clearly, they live for their own interests. People think that without their own interests—that if they were to lose their interests—they wouldn't be able to survive. It's as if their survival is inseparable from their own interests, so most people are blind to all but their own interests. They see their own interests as higher than anything else, they live for their own interests, and getting them to give up their own interests is like asking them to give up their own lives” (The Word, Vol. 3. The

Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. Knowing One's Disposition Is the Foundation of Changing It).

“Suppose a deceitful person is aware that they are deceitful, that they are fond of lying and dislike telling the truth, and that they're always concealing things in their dealings with others, but they revel in this, thinking to themselves, 'Living like this is great. I'm constantly pulling the wool over others' eyes, but they can't do the same to me. I'm nearly always satisfied as far as my own interests, pride, status, and vanity go. Things go according to my plans, flawlessly, seamlessly, and no one can see through them.' Is that sort of person willing to be honest? They aren't. This person believes deceitfulness and crookedness to be intelligence and wisdom, to be positive things. They treasure these things and cannot bear to do without them. 'This is the perfect way to behave, and the only nourishing way to live,' they think. 'It's the only valuable way to live, the only way to live that causes others to envy me

and look up to me. It would be foolish and idiotic for me not to live by satanic philosophies. I'd always be losing out—getting bullied, discriminated against, and treated like a lackey. There's no value in living like that. I'll never be an honest person!' Will this kind of person give up their deceitful disposition and practice being honest? Absolutely not. ... They have no love for positive things, they do not yearn for the light, and they do not love the way of God or the truth. They like to follow worldly trends, they are enamored with fame, gain, and status, they love standing out from the crowd, they worship fame, gain, and status, and they venerate the great and famous, but in actual fact, they venerate demons and Satans. What they pursue at heart isn't the truth or positive things; instead, they revere knowledge. In their hearts, they do not approve of those who pursue the truth and testify to God; instead, they approve of and admire people who have special talents and gifts. In their faith in God, they do not walk the path of pursuing the truth, but that of pursuing fame, gain, status, and power; they strive to be someone of great guile, who win with brilliant stratagems; they try to integrate themselves into the upper echelons of society to become a great and renowned person. They want to be greeted with adoration and welcome on all occasions they happen to attend; they want to be an idol to people. That's the kind of person they want to be. What sort of way is this? It is the way of demons, the path of evil. It is not the way taken by a believer in God. They use Satan's philosophies, its logic, they use its every ploy, every ruse, in every setting, in order to con people out of their personal trust, to make them worship and follow them. This is not the path that ought to be walked by people who believe in God; not only will such people not be saved, but also meet with God's punishment—of this there cannot be the

slightest doubt” (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. One Cannot Be Saved by Believing in Religion or Engaging in Religious Ceremony). God’s words showed me why I was able to lie and act deceitfully over and over again, and why I never dared to open up and be an honest person. It’s because I have a deceitful nature. I was averse to the truth and didn’t love positive things. I hadn’t prioritized seeking to gain the truth, being someone who brings God joy. Instead, I valued satanic philosophies like “Every man for himself and the devil take the hindmost,” “People need their pride just as a tree needs its bark,” and “No great feats can be accomplished without telling lies,” as well as my own image and interests. When I was little, I had a relative who just had a middle school education, but said he was a college graduate. When he clearly didn’t have some skill, he’d talk himself up, saying he’d studied it in some prestigious college. When he lied and put on an act that way, not only did people not look down on him, but they looked up to him and admired him. I saw many similar instances growing up, and I was influenced by them. Without realizing it, in my heart I approved of those satanic approaches. I felt that sometimes a lie really could resolve a matter. Not only could you gain admiration, but you might get what you wanted. So I kept living by this view after coming to God’s house. If anything involved my image or interests, I couldn’t help but lie, cheat, and put on an act. Even when I felt guilty after lying, I still didn’t dare open up to everyone, afraid that if I were forthright, they would see right through me and think poorly of me. The thought of being embarrassed like that—you may as well kill me! I preferred living in darkness and misery over uttering a true word, becoming increasingly hypocritical and deceitful. The Chinese Communist Party is just like that. No matter how many scandalous, evil things it does, it never brings them into the light, but deludes the world with its lies. It puts on an image of being great, glorious, and correct to mislead people, to fool

the common people. It's so despicable and evil. Wasn't my lying and deceit essentially the same as the Chinese Communist Party's? It reminded me of God's words: **"What sort of way is this? It is the way of demons, the path of evil. It is not the way taken by a believer in God. They use Satan's philosophies, its logic, they use its every ploy, every ruse, in every setting, in order to con people out of their personal trust, to make them worship and follow them. This is not the path that ought to be walked by people who believe in God; not only will such people not be saved, but also meet with God's punishment—of this there cannot be the slightest doubt"** (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. One Cannot Be Saved by Believing in Religion or Engaging in Religious Ceremony). God is faithful. God requires us to be honest people to gain His salvation in the end. But Satan uses all sorts of philosophies and fallacies to mislead and corrupt people, getting us to constantly lie and cheat for our own reputation and status, becoming more and more hypocritical and deceitful. Ultimately, we'll descend into hell and be punished along with it. At that point, I clearly saw Satan's cunning and vicious motive. I hated it from the bottom of my heart and was willing to pursue being an honest person.

I read something else in God's words later: **"That God asks for people to be honest proves that He truly loathes and dislikes deceitful people. God's dislike of deceitful people is a dislike of their way of doing things, their dispositions, their intents and their methods of trickery; God dislikes all of these things. If deceitful people are able to accept the truth, admit to their deceitful dispositions, and are willing to accept God's salvation, then they too have a hope of being saved—for God treats all people equally, as does the truth. And so, if we wish to become people who please God, the first thing we must do is change our principles of comportment. No longer can we live according to**

satanic philosophies, no longer can we get by on lies and trickery. We must cast off all our lies and become honest people. Then God's view of us will change. Previously, people always relied on lies, pretense, and trickery while living among others, and used satanic philosophies as the basis of their existence, their lives, and the foundation for their comportment. This was something that God loathed. Among nonbelievers, if you speak frankly, tell the truth, and are an honest person, then you will be slandered, judged, and forsaken. So you follow worldly trends and live by satanic philosophies; you become more and more skilled at lying, and more and more deceitful. You also learn to use insidious means to achieve your goals and protect yourself. You become more and more prosperous in Satan's world, and as a result, you fall deeper and deeper into sin until you cannot extricate yourself. In God's house, things are precisely the opposite. The more you lie and play deceitful games, the more God's chosen people will become sick of you and forsake you. If you refuse to repent and still cling to satanic philosophies and logic, if you use ploys and elaborate schemes to disguise and package yourself, then you are very likely to be revealed and eliminated. This is because God loathes deceitful people. Only honest people can prosper in God's house, and deceitful people will eventually be forsaken and eliminated. All of this is preordained by God" (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. The Most Fundamental Practice of Being an Honest Person). **"Accepting the truth and knowing yourself is the path to growth in life and to attaining salvation, it is the chance for you to come before God to accept His scrutiny, judgment, and chastisement, and to gain the truth and life. If you give up on pursuing the truth for the sake of pursuing fame, gain, and status and your own interests, this is tantamount to giving up on the opportunity to accept**

God's judgment and chastisement, and to attain salvation. You are choosing fame, gain, and status and your own interests, but what you are giving up is the truth, and what you are losing is the life, and the chance to be saved. Which means more? If you choose your own interests and give up on the truth, is this not foolish? To put it in vernacular terms, this is suffering a great loss for the sake of a small advantage. Fame, gain, status, money, and interests are all temporary, they are all ephemeral, whereas the truth and life are eternal and immutable. If people resolve the corrupt dispositions that cause them to pursue fame, gain, and status, then they have hope of attaining salvation. Moreover, the truths that people gain are eternal; Satan cannot take these truths away from people, nor can anyone else. You relinquish your interests but what you gain are the truth and salvation; these results are yours, and you gain them for yourself. If people choose to practice the truth, then even though they have lost their interests, they are gaining God's salvation and eternal life. Those people are the smartest ones. If people give up the truth for the sake of their interests, then they lose the life and God's salvation; those people are the most foolish ones" (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. Knowing One's Disposition Is the Foundation of Changing It). God's words reminded me that only an honest person can be saved and enter the kingdom of heaven. Deceitful people just end up revealed and eliminated by God. Which path someone chooses and what sort of person they are directly impacts their outcome and destination. But I used to be so blind. Instead of loving the truth, I just focused on maintaining my image, to the point of lying repeatedly and putting on an act. After the fact, I didn't have the courage to open up, and I still hadn't addressed even the most fundamental lies. I hadn't changed my life disposition at all. If I kept on in my faith this way, how could I be saved

by God? I saw that caring about reputation and pursuing personal gain had no value. I might gain others' admiration and support that way, but disgust God with constant lying and losing the chance to be saved isn't worth it.

In my seeking of the path to become an honest person, I saw this in God's words: **"You must seek the truth to resolve any problem that arises, no matter what it is, and by no means disguise yourself or put on a false face for others. Your shortcomings, your deficiencies, your faults, your corrupt dispositions—be completely open about them all, and fellowship about them all. Do not keep them inside. Learning how to open yourself up is the first step toward life entry, and it is the first hurdle, which is the most difficult to overcome. Once you have overcome it, entering the truth is easy. What does taking this step signify? It means that you are opening your heart and showing everything you have, good or bad, positive or negative; baring yourself for others and for God to see; hiding nothing from God, concealing nothing, disguising nothing, free of deceit and trickery, and being likewise open and honest with other people. In this way, you live in the light, and not only will God scrutinize you, but other people will also be able to see that you act with principle and a degree of transparency. You do not need to use any methods to protect your reputation, image, and status, nor do you need to cover up or disguise your mistakes. You do not need to engage in these useless efforts. If you can let these things go, you will be very relaxed, you will live without constraints or pain, and you will live entirely in the light"** (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. Part Three). From God's words, I learned that to be an honest person and speak truthfully, when something involves my pride or interests, I should first pray and accept God's scrutiny. No matter what flaws or shortcomings I have, or what corruption I reveal, I can't hide or disguise it.

Only showing my true self and seeking the truth can resolve this problem of lying, bit by bit. Whatever corruption I revealed, and whatever flaws and shortcomings I have, God could actually see perfectly clearly, so I couldn't cover them up with lies and pretense. Even if other people didn't know me well in the beginning, with time, everyone would see me clearly. And though I was responsible for watering work, I was new to that duty and still had a lot of flaws and shortcomings. When I didn't have a good grasp of a newcomer's notions or issues, or when I had a shallow understanding of the truth and couldn't fellowship clearly, seeking a leader's help was a normal approach, not embarrassing at all. I needed to openly face my shortcomings and be brave enough to tell the truth, practice the truth, and be an honest person. That is the right way forward. My heart brightened when I thought about this. I prayed and repented to God. I would stop speaking and acting for my reputation and interests, and practice according to God's words instead. I saw Sister Cheng Lin later and told her all about my issues with lying. I felt really relaxed and free. I knew I was very image-conscious, and I always cared what people thought of me. When things came up I tended to protect my reputation and interests, and couldn't help but lie. I kept praying to God, asking Him to watch over my heart, so I would be aware when I was about to lie, and could quickly change course, opening up and being an honest person.

Once in a gathering with a leader, he asked everyone to share their opinion on a new believer's issue. I felt incredibly nervous. The leader grasped more of the principles than me. It would be clear in an instant whether I could identify the problem, if I was right or wrong, and if there were deviations. If I couldn't see the heart of the issue or resolve it, what would the leader think of me? I got more wound up as I thought about it, and just couldn't calm down and ponder the new believer's issue. Then I

thought of God's words: **"You do not need to use any methods to protect your reputation, image, and status, nor do you need to cover up or disguise your mistakes. You do not need to engage in these useless efforts. If you can let these things go, you will be very relaxed, you will live without constraints or pain, and you will live entirely in the light"**

(The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. Part Three). Pondering God's words, I understood that I should be an honest person, and tell the truth. No matter how many problems I see or what deviations I might have, I should still speak truthfully, not covering up, disguising or pretending, or thinking of the leader's opinion of me. All that mattered was practicing the truth and being an honest person before God. These thoughts allowed me to calm down. Then, I was able to share my opinion. After listening, the leader added his own fellowship on the things we'd missed. Through this kind of communication, I gained a clearer understanding of how I should resolve the newcomers' problems. From this experience, I felt how wonderful it is to tell the truth, like God tells us to. It's so relaxing and freeing. I'm not living in the uneasiness and pain of lying anymore. I'm so grateful to God! If I hadn't been exposed in these situations, or judged and revealed by God's words, I'd never have such understanding and change.

57. Why Couldn't I Practice the Truth?

By Ye Di, China

When I was a leader, some brothers and sisters reported that Yang Li, the leader of a church that I was responsible for, wasn't doing any actual work. Through real investigation, I found out that Yang Li spent all day doing general affairs work, so that she had no time to do any of the work of a church leader. Whenever she went to a group gathering, she would always say she was busy, and when she was done making the necessary arrangements she would always leave in a hurry. She almost never fellowshiped with her brothers and sisters in gatherings, nor did she actually understand or resolve the problems and difficulties they faced in the course of their duties. Several deacons also reported that Yang Li only met with them once every few months. Her brothers and sisters' problems and difficulties were not being resolved in a timely manner, they had become negative and passive in their duties, and their life entry was being hampered. Moreover, some brothers and sisters had no sense of burden and consistently muddled through in their duties. And Yang Li didn't fellowship with them, help them, or dismiss them in good time. An evil person was disrupting and disturbing the church life, but Yang Li didn't cleanse them from the church within a reasonable timeframe. Because Yang Li didn't do actual work, church life had been disturbed, and various tasks were failing to yield results, reducing things to a state of paralysis. When I fellowshiped with Yang Li and exposed her problems, not only did she refuse to accept what I was saying—she even argued back, trying to justify herself, and attempting to place the blame for the church work's lack of results on the sister she'd been partnered with. Based on Yang Li's behavior, and seeing that she absolutely refused to accept the truth or

repent, I deemed her a false leader who did no actual work, one that should be dismissed immediately. But I hesitated. Some of the brothers and sisters didn't discern Yang Li, and felt that she had some caliber and gifts. They said that she had a quick mind, and was good at fellowshiping in gatherings. She worked long hours every day to do her duty, they said, and she had a real sense of burden. They worshiped her, and defended her. Since everyone seemed to think so highly of her, I thought, then by dismissing her as soon as I came along, wouldn't they think of me as arrogant? Would they think that I refused to give her a chance to repent? Or, perhaps they would think that I was just keen to make bold changes to assert my newfound authority over everyone and establish my prestige? I thought to myself, "Maybe the brothers and sisters should write their own evaluations of Yang Li first. Then I can judge whether or not to dismiss her." But the brothers and sisters were undiscerning of her, and their evaluations were of little value as references. The CCP's persecution was so severe at this time that it was impossible to gather with the brothers and sisters to fellowship and discern her. If I waited until I could fellowship with them before dismissing her, then the church work would be delayed for who knew how long. I thought, "It would be better to dismiss her first, then fellowship and discern her behavior with the brothers and sisters later." But, I was still worried, wondering, "If the brothers and sisters weren't given the chance to write an evaluation before her dismissal, would it even be possible to win them over? There was another option: I could write a letter to the leader to report on Yang Li's situation. If the leader agreed to it, then I would dismiss her. That way, even if it failed to pass muster with the brothers and sisters, I wouldn't have to take sole responsibility for the decision. Everyone would know that it wasn't just me who decided on this course of action, and so they wouldn't say such negative things about me." These thoughts kept

turning over in my head, and finally I decided to write to the leader the next day.

The next morning, I told my partnered sister about Yang Li's situation. She also believed that Yang Li was a false leader who should be dismissed as soon as possible. She suggested dismissing Yang Li while writing a letter to inform the leader. I thought that this was also an appropriate course of action—but, when I went to implement it, I hesitated again, thinking, “This is all just based on what I've seen of Yang Li's behavior. Without an evaluation by the brothers and sisters, would everyone really agree to dismiss her? When the time comes, will they protest on behalf of Yang Li? Will they say that I'm arrogant, or that I can't treat people fairly? If the brothers and sisters aren't convinced by my decision and report me because of it, then I'll really lose face.” The more I thought about it, the more confused I became. My sister saw the uneasy look on my face, and asked me, “Is it that you're worried about the other brothers and sisters? That if you dismiss Yang Li without their evaluation, they won't accept it? We dismiss false leaders according to principles, in order to protect the church's work. Why are you so concerned about this?” Hearing what she said, I began to reflect: “It's true. God's house clearly requires us to dismiss leaders and workers who run amok and who fail to do any actual work, to avoid delaying the work of the church. I've already seen that Yang Li is a false leader, but I keep wanting the brothers and sisters' consent before dismissing her. Why is this?” I realized that this state was not right. So, together with my sister, I sought to resolve this problem. And we saw two passages of God's words that said: **“As leaders and workers, you're capable of ignoring problems that occur in the performance of duties, and you even look for various pretexts and excuses to avoid responsibility. There are some problems that you are capable of solving,**

but don't, and the problems you are incapable of solving you do not report to your superiors, as if they have nothing to do with you. Is this not a dereliction of your duty? Is treating the work of the church thus a clever thing to do, or a foolish thing to do? (Foolish.) Are such leaders and workers not slippery? Are they not devoid of any sense of responsibility? When they ignore problems in front of them, does this not show they are heartless and treacherous? Treacherous people are the most foolish people of all. You must be an honest person, you must have a sense of responsibility when you face problems, and you must try every means possible to seek the truth to resolve problems. You absolutely must not be a treacherous person. If you only concern yourself with shirking responsibility and washing your hands of it when problems arise, you would even be condemned for this behavior among nonbelievers, not to mention in God's house! This is condemned and cursed by God and God's chosen people despise and reject such behavior. God loves honest people, but hates deceitful and slippery people. If you are a treacherous person and attempt to play tricks, will God not loathe you? Will God's house simply let you off the hook? Sooner or later, you will be held accountable. God likes honest people and dislikes treacherous people. Everyone should understand this clearly, and stop being confused and doing foolish things. Momentary ignorance is excusable, but refusing to accept the truth at all is just obstinacy. Honest people can take responsibility. They do not consider their own gains and losses, they just safeguard the work and interests of God's house. They have kind and honest hearts that are like bowls of clear water that one can see the bottom of at a glance. There is also transparency in their actions. A deceitful person always plays tricks, always disguises things, covers up, and wraps themselves up so tightly

that no one can see through them. People can't see through to their inner thoughts, but God can scrutinize the deepest things in their heart. If God sees that they are not an honest person, and that they are slippery—never accepting the truth, always engaging in deceit against God, and never handing their heart over to Him—then God will not like them, He will loathe and abandon them” (The Word, Vol. 5. The Responsibilities of Leaders and Workers. The Responsibilities of Leaders and Workers (8)). **“All of you say you are considerate of God's burden and will defend the testimony of the church, but who among you has really been considerate of God's burden? Ask yourself: Are you someone who has shown consideration for His burden? Can you practice righteousness for Him? Can you stand up and speak for Me? Can you steadfastly put the truth into practice? Are you bold enough to fight against all of Satan's deeds? Would you be able to set your feelings aside and expose Satan for the sake of My truth? Can you allow My intentions to be satisfied in you? Have you offered up your heart in the most crucial of moments? Are you someone who follows My will? Ask yourself these questions, and think about them often”** (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. Utterances of Christ in the Beginning, Chapter 13). God's words exposed my despicable intentions like a hammer hitting a nail. I saw, then, that I was a treacherous person. I'd clearly confirmed Yang Li to be a false leader who did no actual work and that the brothers and sisters had no discernment toward her, and that they even adored and defended her. But, instead of dismissing her as soon as possible, in accordance with principles, I was being cunning in order to protect my face and status. I knew full well that the brothers and sisters didn't discern her, and that there was no real purpose to having them write an evaluation, but I was still willing to waste time going through this process out of fear that I would be called arrogant

after dismissing Yang Li, and that this would impact my status and image. I covered up my despicable intentions with the pretext of securing the brothers and sisters' agreement and I even wanted to ask the leader's opinion before dismissing her—that way, even if the brothers and sisters objected to her dismissal, I could just say that the leader had agreed to it, so I wouldn't have to bear that responsibility alone. I thought of everything I could to try and protect myself, playing tricks and using ruses to get what I wanted. I was so cunning! It was my responsibility, and the demand of God's house, that I quickly dismiss unsuitable false leaders. But I shirked my responsibility by being indecisive—all I thought about was how to protect my face and status. I didn't consider how much of a hindrance and a loss it would be, to both the work of the church and to the life entry of the brothers and sisters, if I didn't dismiss this false leader in a timely fashion. I watched on as the false leader harmed the church, and rather than standing up to expose her, dismiss her and protect the interests of the church, I kept putting my own interests first. I even found a way to excuse myself from the situation. I was so selfish, and despicable! The more I thought about it, the more I felt unworthy of this duty, let alone face my brothers and sisters.

I pondered all this. I believed in God, I ate and drank God's words every day, and I did my duty. So why, when I was faced with a problem, did I stop practicing the truth? Why couldn't I safeguard the interests of the church? What exactly were the reasons for this? Later on, I read a passage of God's words, and came to understand a little more about this problem. God's words say: **“Are there any among you who believe at heart only in the vague God in heaven, yet always have notions about the incarnate God? If there are truly such people, then they are believers in religion. Believers in religion do not acknowledge the incarnate God in their hearts, and even if they do, they always have notions about Him and**

are never able to submit. Isn't that so? Strictly speaking, such people are not believers in God. Although they may claim to believe in God, in reality, they aren't much different from believers in religion. In their hearts, all they believe in is the vague God; they are abiders in religious notions and regulations. So, with anyone who does not pursue the truth, who focuses only on good behavior and adherence to regulations, who does not practice the truth, and whose disposition does not change in the slightest, what that person is doing is believing in religion. What feature distinguishes those who believe in religion? (They focus only on external practices and appearing to behave well.) What are the principles and basis for their actions? (Satanic philosophies for worldly dealings.) What satanic philosophies for worldly dealings and satanic, corrupt dispositions are there? Crookedness and deceitfulness; being a law unto oneself; arrogance and conceit; having the last word in all things; never searching for the truth or fellowshiping with the brothers and sisters; and when taking action, thinking always of one's own interests, of one's own pride, and status—all of this is acting based on a satanic disposition. It is following Satan. If one believes in God but does not heed His words, accept the truth, or submit to His arrangements and orchestrations; if they only exhibit certain good behaviors, but are unable to rebel against the flesh, and relinquish nothing of their pride or interests; if, though by appearances they are performing their duty, they still live by their satanic dispositions, and have not in the least given up or changed their satanic philosophies and modes of existence, how, then, could they possibly believe in God? That is belief in religion. Such people forsake things and expend themselves superficially, but to look at the path they walk and the origin and starting point of everything they do, they don't base those things on the words of God or

the truth; instead, they continue to act according to their own notions and imaginings, their subjective assumptions, and their ambitions and desires. The philosophies and dispositions of Satan still serve as the basis of their existence and actions. In matters where they do not understand the truth, they do not seek it; in matters where they do understand the truth, they do not practice it, honor God as great, or treasure the truth. Though they nominally and verbally believe in and acknowledge God, and though they may appear able to perform a duty and follow God, they are living by their satanic disposition in everything they say and do. The things they say and do are all revelations of a corrupt disposition. You won't see them practicing or experiencing God's words, much less manifestation of their seeking and submitting to the truth in all things. In their actions, they consider their own interests first, and fulfill their own desires and intents first. Are these people who follow God? (No.) ... They never pay attention to what God's intentions or requirements are, and how people must practice in order to satisfy God. Though they may sometimes pray before God and fellowship with Him, they are merely talking to themselves, not sincerely seeking the truth. When they pray to God and read His words, they do not relate them to the matters they encounter in real life. So, in the environment arranged by God, how do they treat His sovereignty, arrangements, and orchestrations? When faced with things that do not satisfy their own desires, they avoid them and resist them in their hearts. When faced with things that cause a loss to their interests or prevent their interests' satisfaction, they try every means to seek a way out, striving to maximize their own benefits and fighting to avoid any losses. They do not seek to satisfy God's intentions, but only their own desires. Is this faith in God? Do such people have a

relationship with God? No, they do not. They live in a base, sordid, intransigent, and ugly manner. Not only do they have no relationship with God, but they also go against God's sovereignty and arrangements at every turn" (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. One Cannot Be Saved by Believing in Religion or Engaging in Religious Ceremony). Pondering God's words, my heart roiled like the ocean in a storm. Looking back on my behavior, I was one of those people exposed by God: a believer in religion. Although I appeared capable of forsaking and expending myself, I didn't seek the truth principles when I encountered issues. I only ever thought of my own interests, and lived by satanic rules of survival such as "Every man for himself and the devil take the hindmost" and "Sensible people are good at self-protection, seeking only to avoid making mistakes." These rules had become deeply rooted inside my heart—I felt that people should live for themselves, and that those who didn't think about themselves were fools. I had taken these rules as guidelines for my own personal conduct, and thus had become more and more selfish, cunning, deceitful and despicable. Even though I'd read so many of God's words after coming to believe in Him, I still didn't accept the truth. I didn't live by God's words, but by Satan's philosophies. With regards to the matter of dismissing Yang Li, I knew that what I should do was to practice the truth, and that this would be beneficial to the work of the church and the lives of the brothers and sisters. But, in order to save my face and status, and avoid the brothers and sisters calling me arrogant, I chose to put my actions on hold, and just look on as a false leader continued to harm and delay the church's work. Was I not protecting this false leader, giving my tacit consent to her evil deeds? If a person who truly believed in God and who had a sense of justice saw the work of the church being hindered, they would act in accordance with God's words and stand up to safeguard the interests of the church. But when I encountered

such a situation, I didn't practice the truth. Instead, I lived by Satan's worldly philosophies. How could I be a believer in God? I had thought that I believed in God, that I could forsake and expend myself, and that I could suffer and pay the price for my belief. I thought I could submit to whatever duty the church assigned me to. But now, I realized that this was all just superficial good conduct. Being confronted with this issue had revealed me. I didn't have the reality of practicing the truth, and when I did my duty, I was bound by my corrupt disposition and satanic philosophies. I didn't believe in God, but in religion. My belief was not approved of by God, but despised and loathed by Him. If I didn't repent, then my outcome would be to be punished and eliminated.

I read more of God's words: **"In the house of God, no matter what duty you perform, you must grasp the principles, and be able to practice the truth. Then you will have principles. If you cannot see through something, if you are not sure what the appropriate way to act is, you should seek and fellowship to come to a consensus. Once you have determined what's beneficial to the church's work and to the brothers and sisters, do that. Do not be constrained by any regulations, do not delay, do not wait, and do not be a passive observer. If you are always a passive observer and never have an opinion of your own, if you always wait until someone else has made a decision before doing anything, and if you just drag your heels and wait when no one has made a decision, what will the consequence be? Every item of work will come to a standstill, and nothing will get done. You should learn to seek the truth, or at least be able to act based on your conscience and reason. So long as you can see through to the appropriate way to do something, and the majority of people also think that method is workable, then that is how you should practice. Do not be afraid of**

taking responsibility, or of offending others, or of bearing consequences. If someone does not do anything real, and they are always calculating, and afraid of taking responsibility, and do not dare to hold to the principles in their actions, then this shows that they are too slippery and deceitful, and that they harbor too many crafty schemes. How lacking in virtue it is to wish to enjoy God's grace and blessings and yet do nothing real. There is no one God despises more than these kinds of cunning and deceitful people. Regardless of what you are thinking, if you are not practicing according to the truth, have no loyalty, are always tainted by personal adulterations, and always have your own thoughts and ideas, God scrutinizes all these things, and knows about them. Do you think God does not know about them? In that case, you are so foolish! And if you do not immediately repent, you will not have God's work. Why is that? Because God scrutinizes the depths of people's hearts. He sees, with absolute clarity, all the little crafty schemes they have, and He sees that their hearts are walled off from Him, that they are not of one heart with Him. What are the main things that keep people's hearts from God? Their thoughts, their interests and pride, their status, and their own little crafty schemes. When there is a wall of these things in people's hearts that separates them from God, and they are constantly hiding away secrets and always have their own motives, this means trouble. If you are of slightly poor caliber and have slightly shallow experience, but are willing to pursue the truth, and are always of one heart with God, and can give your all to what God entrusts of you, without playing any tricks, then God will see this. If your heart is always walled off from God, and you always harbor petty schemes, and if you always live for your own interests and pride, are always calculating these things in your heart,

and are possessed by them, then God will not be satisfied with you, and He will not enlighten or illuminate you, and He will ignore you, and your heart will grow ever darker. This means that when you perform your duty or do anything, you will make a mess of it, and there will be nothing worthwhile about it. That is because you are so selfish and vile, always scheming for your own sake, without being sincere toward God, and you dare to be deceitful and try to trick God, and you not only do not accept the truth, but are sly in performing your duty—which is not sincerely expending for God. And since you do not perform your duty sincerely, merely toil a little, and use this as an opportunity to get more benefits, and since you also wish to conspire to obtain fame, gain, and status for yourself, and do not accept and obey when you are pruned, it is likely that you will offend God’s disposition. God scrutinizes the depths of people’s hearts. If you do not repent, you will be in danger, and you will likely be eliminated by God, in which case you will never again have the chance to receive God’s approval” (God’s Fellowship). God’s words gave me a path of practice. When you encounter problems that you can’t see clearly, you can seek fellowship with brothers and sisters who understand the truth, and reach a consensus before acting to solve it. If you see clearly that the course of action aligns with the truth principles, and will be beneficial to the work of the church, then you should follow it in a timely manner. But if you are indecisive, if you always wait for the approval of a leader before making your decision, then it will likely hold up the work of the church. In fact, when dismissing unsuitable leaders or workers, it would also be in line with the principles to understand the evaluations of the brothers and sisters, to make a comprehensive assessment and then decide. This can be a good way to avoid making mistakes when dismissing leaders and workers. But principles are not rules. They must be

used flexibly, depending on the circumstances. In the case of Yang Li's dismissal, my partnered sister and I had already confirmed that Yang Li was a false leader in accordance with the principles, that if I did not immediately dismiss her it would only hold up the church's work. There was no need to wait until I collected the brothers and sisters' evaluations before dismissing her. Besides that, the brothers and sisters did not discern Yang Li—they had been misled by her. Even if I did ask them to write an evaluation it would be meaningless, a mere formality, and a waste of time. I should have directly dismissed her and exposed how she did no actual work, granting the brothers and sisters some discernment toward her and freeing them from her misleading. That would've been the only way to fulfill my responsibility as a leader. But in this matter, I had lived by Satan's philosophy, using deception to protect myself. I hadn't practiced the truth, and I hadn't taken a shred of responsibility. If I kept doing my duty like this, I would be spurned by God. I knew that Yang Li was a false leader, but I didn't dare dismiss her directly because I was afraid that people would call me arrogant. This showed that I didn't understand what arrogance was, nor did I understand things like having a sense of justice and adhering to principles. Through seeking and contemplation, I came to the understanding that one's arrogance betrays their satanic disposition. When people do not seek the truth principles, but are always opinionated, insist on their own ideas and viewpoints and make everybody obey them, that is conceit, arrogance, and self-righteousness. Having a sense of justice means upholding the truth and safeguarding the work of God. Through seeking and prayer, one can confirm which course of action conforms to the truth and to the word of God, and can uphold the truth and safeguard the church work and persist in this to the end, irrespective of what others think or say. This is a manifestation of having a sense of justice. In fact, our

determination that Yang Li was a false leader was based on principles. Dismissing her would have been beneficial to the work of the church. Doing this would've been in accordance with principles, and would've shown a sense of justice. But I'd been afraid that, without the brothers and sisters' agreement, dismissing Yang Li would've made people say that I was arrogant. I couldn't distinguish between arrogance and having a sense of justice—I viewed a positive thing as being negative. This made me unable to liberate myself, and shy away from doing what was right. I saw that my understanding was completely distorted. If the brothers and sisters couldn't discern a false leader, then I could fellowship with them. I couldn't let my fear of others' judgment stop me from upholding principles. I had to accept God's scrutiny and protect the church's interests, no matter what they thought. So, the next day, we dismissed Yang Li.

Afterward, my partnered sister and I fellowshiped with the brothers and sisters based on God's words, and dissected Yang Li's performance—how she consistently failed to do actual work, and how she wouldn't accept the truth. After the fellowship, the brothers and sisters recognized that they'd been deceived by Yang Li's ostensible zeal, and understood how to discern whether or not a leader was qualified. They came to understand that, in order to do so, you had to look not at their gifts, or their way with words, or their busy appearance. Rather, you had to look at whether or not they pursued the truth, did actual work, resolved actual issues, and achieved real results in their work. Seeing the brothers and sisters gain such knowledge made me glad, and I learned that by doing your duty in accordance with the truth principles, you can obtain God's guidance. Before, I had worried that if I directly dismissed Yang Li, the brothers and sisters would be unable to accept it—that they would say I was arrogant. But now, I saw that that was all in my imagination, and when I acted

according to the truth principles, the brothers and sisters did not judge me. Instead, they learned discernment from this situation. Before long, the church elected a suitable leader, the brothers and sisters began to live a normal church life, and the work was able to function normally again. Seeing all this made me very happy, and I learned that acting and doing one's duty in accordance with the truth principles is the only way to gain God's approval. Afterward, I consciously let go of my personal interests and began to do things based on the truth principles, a practice that gave me peace in my heart, and liberated me.

Through this experience, I saw that I was selfish and deceitful. To protect my own reputation and status, I put the church's interests aside, and if it hadn't been for the exposure of God's words, I would not have understood myself and would not have changed. At the same time, I now understand how important it is to seek the truth principles in everything I do, and that only by seeking the truth and acting according to principles can I be qualified to do my duty.

58. The Consequences of Self-Preservation

By Xiaowei, China

In 2019, Sister Guan Xin was brought in to keep tabs on our church's work. I already knew her from a couple of years earlier, and found that she hadn't changed. In gatherings she often spoke words and doctrines, but could not share any experience or understanding of God's words. When brothers and sisters were struggling in their duty, she constantly criticized and reprimanded them rather than fellowshipping on the truth to resolve their difficulties. This left them feeling beaten down and offered no path of practice. When some were in a negative state and couldn't shake it off for the time being, Guan Xin passed verdicts on and castigated them, which left them feeling constrained. She often called attention to how she'd given up her job and family, and had suffered and paid a price, and lots of newer church members who lacked discernment really looked up to her. The work of the church wasn't going well, around then, and the brothers and sisters were not in a good state. Later I found out that Li Xiao, a gospel deacon, wasn't pulling her weight in the performance of her duty or doing any real work at all. She didn't change after several rounds of fellowship and pruning, and even became negative and resistant about it. This was holding up our gospel work and she needed to be replaced. I talked with Guan Xin about this, but she felt it would be hard to find a good candidate to take over, and insisted that Li Xiao should stay on. She even said to me, in a loud manner, "How many times have you tried to help Li Xiao out of compassion, since you discovered her issues? Have you fulfilled your responsibilities? Look at people's potential instead of being so arrogant!" I was thinking, "Compassionate help is for those who can accept the truth, whereas a person who won't accept fellowship and won't change should be

replaced right away, in line with principle.” I persisted with my point of view to begin with, but Guan Xin consistently disagreed and we started arguing. Several brothers and sisters who were present urged me not to be so competitive, which made me feel kind of constrained. “None of them have discernment over what Guan Xin is saying,” I thought, “and if I stick to my guns about dismissing Li Xiao, they may say I am arrogant, self-righteous and obstinate, and that I am disrupting and disturbing the church’s work.” After that, I kept quiet.

We needed to elect an upper leader after that, and were asked to suggest suitable candidates. Some of the brothers and sisters wanted to recommend Guan Xin. I was thinking that she tended to do things her own way without looking to principle, and she just spoke words and doctrines rather than resolving the real issues of others. She wasn’t a good candidate, and I knew I needed to fellowship with the brothers and sisters for their discernment. But Guan Xin and I had argued about changing the gospel deacon, and others had thought I was being competitive about it. If I now said that Guan Xin wasn’t a good candidate, would they say I was using this chance to settle a grudge and suppress her? I figured, “Fine, the less trouble, the better. I’m not voting for Guan Xin, but if they want to elect her it’s up to them.” But when it came to writing the appraisal, I felt concerned. Everyone else had pretty good things to say about Guan Xin, so if I wrote my honest opinion, the leader would think that despite being perfectly aware Guan Xin wasn’t a good candidate, I hadn’t fellowshiped on the truth about this with brothers and sisters and helped them suggest candidates suited to the principles. Which meant I wasn’t upholding the church’s work. Would the leader then stop cultivating me? I was in a quandary about what to do. Eventually I decided to go along with everyone else’s views. In the appraisal, I simply wrote about Guan Xin’s positives. I

said, phonily, that she pursued the truth, had good humanity and was compassionate, and that when she saw corruption in us she found relevant words of God to help us.... I felt a prick of conscience on finishing the appraisal. When I read God's words after that, I gained no enlightenment, and doing my duty also drained me. However, I didn't self-reflect. I just hoped that luck was on my side. With so many candidates, she probably wouldn't be elected. In which case there would be no chance for my dishonest appraisal to come to light. As it happened, Guan Xin was indeed elected to upper leadership. I was shocked, and felt somewhat unsettled. Had our positive appraisals misguided everyone? But I still didn't have the courage to tell the leader the truth, consoling myself instead with the thought that if Guan Xin really wasn't suited for leadership then God would reveal her. But I continued to feel uneasy about it.

More than a month later, a message came from the leader asking us to once again write appraisals of Guan Xin. I realized it was likely that problems had cropped up in her duty as an upper leader, and this scared me. I also noted that the leader quoted God's words, which read: **"When I say 'following the way of God,' what does the 'way of God' refer to? It means fearing God and shunning evil. And what is fearing God and shunning evil? When you give your appraisal of someone, for example—this relates to fearing God and shunning evil. How do you appraise them? (We must be honest, just, and fair, and our words must not be based on our feelings.) When you say exactly what you think, and exactly what you have seen, you are being honest. First of all, the practice of being honest aligns with following the way of God. This is what God teaches people; this is the way of God. What is the way of God? Fearing God and shunning evil. Is being honest not part of fearing God and shunning evil? And is it not following the way of God? (Yes, it is.) If you**

are not honest, then what you have seen and what you think is not the same as what comes out of your mouth. Someone asks you, 'What is your opinion of that person? Is he responsible in the church's work?' and you reply, 'He's great. He is more responsible than I am, his caliber is better than mine, and his humanity is good, too. He is mature and stable.' But is this what you are thinking in your heart? What you actually see is that although this person does have caliber, he is unreliable, rather deceitful, and very calculating. This is what you're really thinking in your mind, but when the time comes to speak, it occurs to you that, 'I can't tell the truth. I mustn't offend anyone,' so you quickly say something else, and choose nice things to say about him, but nothing you say is what you really think; it is all lies and all fake. Does this indicate that you follow the way of God? No. You have taken the way of Satan, the way of demons. What is the way of God? It is the truth, it is the basis according to which people should comport themselves, and it is the way of fearing God and shunning evil. Although you are speaking to another person, God is also listening; He is watching your heart, and scrutinizing it. People listen to what you say, but God scrutinizes your heart. Are people capable of scrutinizing the hearts of man? At best, people can see that you are not telling the truth; they can see what's on the surface, but only God can see into the depths of your heart. Only God can see what you are thinking, what you are planning, and what little schemes, treacherous ways, and active thoughts you have within your heart. When God sees that you are not telling the truth, what is His opinion and evaluation of you? That you have not followed God's way in this matter because you did not tell the truth. If you were practicing according to God's requirements, you should have told the truth: 'He's a person of caliber, but he's

unreliable.’ Regardless of whether your evaluation was accurate, it would have been honest and come from the heart, and it is the viewpoint and position you should have expressed. But you did not—so were you following the way of God? (No.) If you do not tell the truth, what use is it for you to stress that you are following God’s way and satisfying God? Does God heed the slogans you shout? Does God look at how you shout, how hard you shout, and how great your will is? Does He look at how many times you shout? These are not the things He looks at. God looks at whether you practice the truth, and at the choices you make and how you practice the truth when events befall you. If you choose to maintain relationships, maintain your own self-interest and image, everything is about self-preservation, and God sees that this is the viewpoint and attitude you take when an event befalls you, then He will make an appraisal of you: He will say you are not someone who follows His way” (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. Part Three). Reading God’s words stirred up some feelings for me. I’d never considered appraisal-writing particularly important, or done any seeking on what truths I should practice in this matter. I’d not reflected on whether I had wrong motives or was revealing corruption, in writing an appraisal, or considered if I was giving an appraisal that was fair and objective with a God-fearing heart. At that point I realized that writing an appraisal relates to whether one has a God-fearing heart, and whether they can uphold the work of the church. We were electing an upper leader, which had a bearing on the work of several churches and the life entry of brothers and sisters. A biased or tainted appraisal could misguide others, and electing someone unsuitable could disturb the church’s work and harm the life entry of the brothers and sisters. I knew that Guan Xin wasn’t suitable for upper leadership and that I needed to fellowship on this, for the

discernment of the brothers and sisters. But I was worried that they would say I was retaliating against Guan Xin and suppressing her. So, for the sake of my pride and status, I chose not to speak up. I could have written an honest appraisal and reported on Guan Xin's actual situation, but I was afraid the leader would say I hadn't shared my discernment with others and wasn't upholding the church's work, and that she would have a poor impression of me. So I chose the unethical option, writing counterfactually about Guan Xin as a person who pursued the truth and did real work. And it was all phony. How slippery and deceitful I was! God requires us to be honest, and to speak appropriately and in accordance with the facts. But I lied about a matter as significant as electing a leader. I didn't have a God-fearing heart at all. The devil was a liar from the beginning. I was uttering falsehoods, contrary to the facts, and that was in essence a demonic nature! Rather than considering the work of the church, I wrote an appraisal which ran counter to the facts, misguiding brothers and sisters into electing someone unsuitable. That amounted to disturbing and disrupting the work of the church. This realization frightened me.

Later I read this passage of God's words: **"Once the truth has become life in you, when you observe someone who is blasphemous toward God, unfearful of God, and perfunctory while performing their duty, or who disrupts and disturbs church work, you will respond according to the truth principles, and will be able to identify and expose them as necessary. If the truth has not become your life, and you still live within your satanic disposition, then when you discover evil people and devils who cause disruptions and disturbances to the work of the church, you will turn a blind eye and a deaf ear; you will brush them aside, without reproach from your conscience. You will even think that anyone causing disturbances to the work of the church has nothing**

to do with you. No matter how much the work of the church and the interests of the house of God suffer, you don't care, intervene, or feel guilty—which makes you someone who has no conscience or reason, a disbeliever, a laborer. You eat what is of God's, drink what is of God's, and enjoy all that comes from God, yet feel that any harm to the interests of the house of God is not related to you—which makes you a traitor who bites the hand that feeds you. If you do not protect the interests of the house of God, are you even human? This is a demon that has insinuated itself into the church. You feign belief in God, pretend to be a chosen one, and you want to freeload in God's house. You are not living the life of a human being, are more like a fiend than a person, and are clearly one of the disbelievers” (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. Part Three). The exposure of God's words really pained me. I was the traitor who bites the hand that feeds me that God spoke of. I was eating and drinking God's words, enjoying all His sustenance, but I wasn't upholding the church's work at all. I was acting entirely for the sake of my own interests, knowingly not practicing the truth, again and again, which ended up misguiding others into electing a false leader. Wasn't that harming the church's work, and other brothers and sisters? The more I thought about it, the more I hated myself for being so vile and deceitful. Self-preservation was my only concern, rather than the church's work. In no way was I a true believer. My soul was dark and sunken, I wasn't enlightened by God's words, and I wasn't accomplishing anything in my duty. That was God hiding His face from me. If I kept on biting the hand that fed me, unrepentantly, I'd be spurned and eliminated by God for sure. I truly felt how God's righteous disposition tolerates no human offense, and I hated myself for not practicing the truth and for

committing a transgression. I prayed to God, ready to repent and practice the truth.

Afterward, I read this passage of God's words: **"For all who perform a duty, no matter how profound or shallow their understanding of the truth is, the simplest way to practice entering into the truth reality is to think of the interests of God's house in everything, and to let go of one's selfish desires, personal intents, motives, pride, and status. Put the interests of God's house first—this is the least one should do. If a person who performs a duty cannot even do this much, then how can they be said to be performing their duty? That is not performing one's duty. You should first think of the interests of God's house, be considerate of God's intentions, and consider the work of the church. Put these things first and foremost; only after that can you think about the stability of your status or how others regard you. Do you not feel that this becomes a little easier when you divide it into two steps and make some compromises? If you practice like this for a while, you will come to feel that satisfying God is not such a difficult thing. Furthermore, you should be able to fulfill your responsibilities, perform your obligations and duty, and set aside your selfish desires, intents, and motives; you should show consideration for God's intentions, and put the interests of God's house, the work of the church, and the duty that you are supposed to perform first. After experiencing this for a while, you will feel that this is a good way to comport yourself. It is living straightforwardly and honestly, and not being a base, vile person; it is living justly and honorably rather than being despicable, base, and a good-for-nothing. You will feel that this is how a person should act and the image that they should live out. Gradually, your desire to satisfy your own interests will lessen"** (The Word, Vol. 3. The

Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. Freedom and Liberation Can Be Gained Only by Casting Off One's Corrupt Disposition). I found a path of practice from God's words. We have to always put the work of the church first, and when our personal interests conflict with the church's work we have to rebel against ourselves, set aside our own interests, and fulfill our duties and responsibilities. This time around, when it came to rewriting the appraisal, I could no longer focus attention on what others thought of me or keep on protecting myself. I had to write the truth and be honest. Following that, I opened up to the brothers and sisters. I told them about the corruption I'd revealed, and what I'd come to learn through self-reflection. I also fellowshiped on the principles for electing leaders; that we have to choose people who pursue the truth, have good humanity, and do real work. In light of Guan Xin's conduct, everyone gained discernment and felt ready to write new appraisals, drawing on assessments made in line with the principles. I too wrote an honest appraisal based on Guan Xin's persistent behavior. Putting that into practice gave me a sense of peace.

Later, the leader wrote to say that Guan Xin had been dismissed. She also said that while doing her duty Guan Xin had been arrogant, self-righteous, autocratic, and non-collegial, hindering many of the church's projects, and that Guan Xin had used her position to constrain and suppress others, causing them to become negative.... For me, the contents of the leader's letter read like one slap in the face after another. My face was burning and my mind went blank. All I knew was that I'd offended God, and that I'd played a part in the evil-doing of a false leader. Guan Xin had behaved that way before, and I had discerned it at the time, yet I failed to expose and report her, and acquiesced as other brothers and sisters recommended her for upper leadership. I didn't take on responsibility for the work of the church, and I abetted, by other means, the evil-doing of a

false leader. Moreover, I made excuses for not practicing the truth, and thought that even if I didn't report what I knew, God would reveal it. God does bring everything to light, but I still needed to fulfill my own duty by exposing a false leader and upholding the church's work. Yet I simply stood by, waiting passively. I didn't fulfill my duty or my responsibility, and this had serious repercussions for the work of the church and the life entry of the brothers and sisters. The more I thought about it, the more I felt indebted and guilty. I knew that my transgression could not be made right. In my pain, I came before God again in prayer and repentance. I also wanted to know why it was that I protected my own interests as soon as certain situations befell me. What was the root of the problem? In my spiritual devotion, I read this passage of God's words: **"Until people have experienced God's work and understood the truth, it is Satan's nature that takes charge and dominates them from within. What, specifically, does that nature entail? For example, why are you selfish? Why do you protect your own position? Why do you have such strong feelings? Why do you enjoy those unrighteous things? Why do you like those evils? What is the basis for your fondness for such things? Where do these things come from? Why are you so happy to accept them? By now, you have all come to understand that the main reason behind all these things is that Satan's poison is within man. So what is Satan's poison? How can it be expressed? For example, if you ask, 'How should people live? What should people live for?' people will answer, 'Every man for himself and the devil take the hindmost.' This single phrase expresses the very root of the problem. Satan's philosophy and logic have become people's lives. No matter what people pursue, they do so for themselves—and so they live only for themselves. 'Every man for himself and the devil take the hindmost'—this is the life philosophy of**

man, and it also represents human nature. These words have already become the nature of corrupt mankind and they are the true portrait of corrupt mankind's satanic nature. This satanic nature has already become the basis for corrupt mankind's existence. For several thousand years, corrupt mankind has lived by this venom of Satan, right up to the present day" (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last

Days. How to Walk the Path of Peter). God's words showed me that though I was a believer, I wasn't treating God's words and the truth as benchmarks for how to live and act. I was still living and acting by the concepts of Satan, such as "Every man for himself and the devil take the hindmost," "Profit comes first," and "Sensible people are good at self-protection, seeking only to avoid making mistakes." I was living in accordance with these satanic poisons. I thought that people had to put themselves first and learn to protect their interests from being harmed. That's how to be smart and not lose out. But through this lesson, I saw that living by such satanic poisons—even if it temporarily served my interests—meant casting aside the fundamentals for being human. I became selfish and deceitful, and even defied my conscience to trick others. I became a person without integrity or dignity, who wasn't worthy of trust. Ultimately, I harmed the lives of brothers and sisters and seriously disturbed the church's work, committing a transgression that could never be remedied. I hated how deeply Satan had corrupted me, that I was conscienceless and that I wasn't worthy of living before God. This experience showed me that I didn't understand God at all and didn't believe He scrutinizes all things. I always worried that brothers and sisters would think I was retaliating against Guan Xin and deliberately putting her down. But God's house is reigned over by the truth and God scrutinizes all. So long as my intention was good and I acted in line with the truth principles, others would support me when they understood the truth.

Even if some of them misunderstood me at first, God would scrutinize my heart and my conscience would be clear. Understanding this left me much more at peace, and I resolved that in the future, when something befell me, I would certainly uphold the principles.

After all that, I thought of how the gospel deacon Li Xiao never accepted the truth and didn't pull her weight in doing her duty. Going by the principles, she ought to have been dismissed. I shared my views on this with a few other deacons, and they said, "There's no one available in the church to take over from her at the moment, so let's help and support her for the time being." I was thinking how I'd already tried helping and supporting her a number of times, but she wasn't receptive. If she kept serving as gospel deacon, she'd just hold up the work even more. It was true, though, that there was no one else suitable in the church for gospel deacon, right now. And if I insisted while everyone else disagreed, wouldn't they say I was being arrogant and obstinate? At first, I didn't know what I should do, so I came before God in prayer and seeking. After my prayer I realized I'd started defending my own interests again. I needed to uphold the truth principles in my duty; I couldn't just compromise. To judge by the principles, Li Xiao was manifestly a false worker, and the gospel work would suffer if we kept her in post. I couldn't shy away from addressing that out of fear that others would say I was arrogant; I had to uphold the principles. So, my partnered sister and I fellowshiped on relevant truths with other deacons, and they agreed on dismissing the gospel deacon. After that, the upper leader arranged for a sister from another church to take over our gospel work. She pulled her weight in doing her duty, she understood some principles, and our gospel work gradually picked up. For my part, I felt I was finally putting some of the truth into practice, which brought me a sense of calmness and security.

59. The Decision to Drop Out of School

By Lin Ran, China

Ever since I was little my parents told me that since they had no son, just two girls, me and my elder sister, they couldn't hold their heads high in the family, so I absolutely had to study hard, make them proud and show the family that daughters were just as good as sons. When my parents said that, it really left a deep impression on me, and I resolved to study hard, make them proud, and bring them honor. I always studied hard and got good grades. When the older generation asked kindly how I was doing, seeing my mother looking so happy when she replied really brought me joy, and made me feel I was winning respect for her and making her proud.

In grad school, my parents said to me, "You have to do well in this program, and then go get a PhD. Then you can get a cushy job as a university lecturer, earn lots of money, and make us proud." Hearing my parents say this really stressed me out. After all these years of studying, I had long since become sick of exams. I thought of all those people who'd jumped to their deaths because of the stress of a PhD and feared that I'd end up just like them so I didn't want to study anymore. But looking into my parents' eyes that were full of expectations for me, I just couldn't say no. At that time I had already accepted Almighty God's work of the last days, but because I was so busy, I couldn't attend gatherings. It wasn't until grad school when I was involved in a teaching support program in the countryside that I could attend gatherings in the local church. At one gathering, Sister Zhang Lu told me more and more people were accepting God's work of the last days, and that waterers were urgently needed. She asked if I'd be willing to water newcomers. I knew that as a created being, I had enjoyed a lot of God's grace and the sustenance of the truth, and that I

ought to repay God's love by doing a duty, so I agreed gladly. While watering the newcomers, my partnered sister and I would pray and rely on God to fellowship God's word and resolve their difficulties. Seeing their problems being resolved and them gradually setting down roots in the true way made us so happy, and made us feel like doing our duties was really meaningful.

Later, as more and more newcomers needed watering, I wanted to quit school and do my duty full-time, but I thought of how my parents had put all their hopes on me. If I dropped out of school, the other villagers would keep looking down on my parents. They'd spent so much on me, so how could I let them down? I hesitated, not knowing what to do. One day, I read a passage of God's word: **"You are a created being—you should of course worship God and pursue a life of meaning. If you do not worship God but live within your filthy flesh, then are you not just a beast in human attire? Since you are a human being, you should expend yourself for God and endure all suffering! You should gladly and assuredly accept the little suffering you are subjected to today and live a meaningful life, like Job and Peter. In this world, man wears the devil's clothing, eats food from the devil, and works and serves under the devil's thumb, becoming completely trampled in its filth. If you do not grasp the meaning of life or obtain the true way, then what significance is there in living like this? You are people who pursue the right path, those who seek improvement. You are people who rise up in the nation of the great red dragon, those whom God calls righteous. Is that not the most meaningful life?"** (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. Practice (2)). From God's word I understood that I am a created being, that my life was given by God, and that I should live for God. Pursuing the truth in my duty, casting off my corrupt disposition, and attaining God's salvation

—this is a worthwhile and meaningful life. For so many years, my life had consisted of just studying and teaching, to make my parents happy. I was always so busy, but I felt so empty inside. I didn't even know what it was all for. Even in my free time, I didn't know what I could do that would be meaningful. I didn't know how to get rid of this feeling of emptiness. I tried so many things, like learning instruments, painting, reading, listening to music, and running, but none of them changed how I felt. I was still so empty inside. My life still felt directionless and purposeless. I also thought about my years of hard academic work. Though I got into grad school, and the praise and affirmation of those around me satisfied my vanity, these things didn't bring me spiritual fulfillment or comfort. In the face of the great disasters, even the loftiest knowledge cannot save someone. Only by pursuing the truth, fulfilling a duty well, and casting off your corrupt disposition can you be saved by God and survive. Understanding this, I prayed to God, and decided to hand in my resignation to my teaching school and apply to withdraw from grad school.

One day, after coming back home from watering new believers, I saw that my family had been messaging me over and over again to try and get hold of me. My heart began to pound. What would I do if they were dead set against me doing a duty? I called my mother, and she screamed at me on the phone, “You’ve got some nerve resigning and dropping out of school without telling us!” Then, my family specifically rushed over from my hometown to tell me to go back to teaching and finish school, or else they’d take me straight back to my hometown. I was scared they’d really do it and that in that case I wouldn’t be able to gather or do a duty anymore. So, I just went back to my teaching role. But I felt very uneasy and guilty. I thought of the rapid spread of God’s gospel of the last days, with all the newcomers in need of watering, and about how I should be doing my duty. But when I

thought of my parents' hopes for me I'd start to feel conflicted. I felt like I owed them, and I was afraid of hurting them. At a gathering, the others learned of my state and read some of God's word to me. Almighty God says: **"Are there not many among you who have seesawed between right and wrong? In contests between positive and negative, black and white, you are surely aware of the choices that you have made between family and God, children and God, peace and disruption, riches and poverty, status and ordinariness, being supported and being cast aside, and so on. Between a peaceful family and a broken one, you chose the former, and you did so without any hesitation; between riches and duty, you again chose the former, even lacking the will to return to shore; between luxury and poverty, you chose the former; when choosing between your sons, daughters, wives and husbands, and Me, you chose the former; and between notion and truth, you once again chose the former. Faced with all manner of your evil deeds, I have simply lost faith in you. It simply astounds Me that your hearts are so resistant to being softened. Many years of dedication and effort have apparently brought Me nothing more than your abandonment and despair, but My hopes for you grow with each passing day, for My day has been completely laid bare before everyone. Yet you persist in seeking dark and evil things, and refuse to loosen your grip on them. What, then, will be your outcome? Have you ever given careful consideration to this? If you were asked to choose again, what then would be your position? Would it still be the former? Would you still bring Me disappointment and wretched sorrow?"** (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. To Whom Are You Loyal?). I was very touched when I read these words. God has become flesh to work and save us, and He has poured His heart and soul into us so that in the end we can be saved and remain. Any person with a conscience

and reason should do a duty well to satisfy God. But every time I chose to do a duty, I felt like I was letting my parents down, that they'd invested so much in me and I was failing to repay them, letting all their love and devotion go to waste. I also feared that by quitting school, I wouldn't bring honor to my parents and they would be looked down on in the family again. All I could think about was how to satisfy my parents and I even gave up my duty to spare them the heartache. As a created being, I have enjoyed the sustenance of God's word, but I was not doing a created being's duty to repay God's love. I was so unconscionable. I was letting God down! Even though I was so rebellious, God still didn't abandon me. He just kept on guiding me and supporting me through the brothers and sisters. But all I gave to God in return was pain and disappointment. I was failing to live up to the painstaking efforts God had put into me. I felt so remorseful and guilty, so I prayed to God, "God, I have not been satisfying You. I have owed You so much. Please give me faith and strength, and guide me to make the right choice." After praying, I wrote a letter to my family, telling them that I decided to quit school and do a duty.

Later, my parents said, "If you dare quit school, we'll just overdose and be dead by tomorrow." It was excruciating to hear my mom and dad say this, and I kept praying to God, "God, no matter what they say, I won't betray You! I just ask You to give me the right words to say. My stature is so small, and I am scared that I will unwittingly say something that Satan will use against me because of my ignorance and foolishness. Please guide me to stand firm in my testimony." I felt a little more settled after praying and said to my parents, "You know that I've chosen the right path, so why are you coercing me like this? I just want to believe in God, pursue the truth, and fulfill my duty. Can't you just let me choose my own path?" My mother replied furiously, "I know that believing in God is the right path, but

to do a duty you've even given up your studies. Do you think it's been easy for us to pay for your schooling all these years? You can't be so selfish!" Hearing my mother say this, I thought, "Man is created by God. Everything we enjoy has been given by Him. Doing a duty and expending for God is our responsibility and obligation. If I were to not do a duty to satisfy my parents, that would be selfish." So I said to them, "I've made up my mind. No matter how you obstruct me, I'm still going to do a duty." Agitated, my mother said, "We've spent so much on you so that you could get ahead in life and make us proud in front of the rest of the family, and we could live an easier life. Why don't you think about us at all? You're so cold-blooded!" My sister also called to reprove me, "You realize that if you quit school, everyone in the village is going to look down on us and our parents will be disgraced? If you dare quit school and work, I'll call the police and have them arrest all you believers!" It was so depressing to hear my family say these things. It turned out everything they'd done for me had just been an investment. When I was at grad school making them proud in front of their friends and family, they spoke to me softly, saying I was their most beloved daughter, but when I pursued the truth and was doing a duty instead of bringing them honor, they hurled abuse at me. The effort they put into me was not out of love, but because they were using me. I recalled God's word says: **"Love,' as it is called, refers to an affection that is pure and without blemish, where you use your heart to love, to feel, and to be thoughtful. In love there are no conditions, no barriers, and no distance. In love there is no suspicion, no deceit, and no cunning. In love there is no trade and nothing impure"** (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. Many Are Called, but Few Are Chosen). This is God's explanation of love. Only God's love for mankind is pure and without blemish. To save mankind from the corruption and harm of Satan, God has incarnated twice and has

spoken millions of words of truth, silently paying a price for us. God has never asked anything of us. He just hopes that we can pursue the truth and attain salvation. Only God's love for us is selfless. My family's "love" for me was using me to gain others' respect. This wasn't love, but a transaction, a blatantly benefit-seeking relationship. I recalled that God said: **"People who live in the flesh take as pleasures the various relationships and family bonds of the flesh. They believe that people can't live without their loved ones. Why is it that you do not think of how you came into the world of man? You came alone, originally without relations to others. God brings people here one by one; when you came, you were, in fact, alone"** (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. Part Three). The relationship between family members may be close in the flesh, but there is no spiritual connection. Each person has been preordained to come into this world by God. Everyone has their own role to play and their own mission to fulfill. Though by blood they're my mother, father, and sister, we share no spiritual connection. They just raised me, fulfilled their responsibility, and made my physical life better, but they cannot decide my future or destiny, much less save me from Satan's corruption and harm. Only God can give me the truth and life, and cleanse and save me. My parents didn't allow me to do a duty, trying to keep me away from God and make me lose His salvation, which was harming me and ruining my life. I couldn't be constrained by them. Realizing this, I prayed to God, "God, thank You for giving me some discernment over my family. Please watch over my heart so that I may stand firm!" The next afternoon, I moved out of school to do my duty.

I later thought to myself, "I know I've chosen the right path, so when my family obstructs me and tries to get me to quit my duty why do I always feel constrained by affections, as if I owe them so much? Why exactly is

this?” During a spiritual devotion, I read God’s word that said: **“In the past, people always acted on their consciences and used them to measure everyone. People constantly had to pass the test of conscience, they always felt that gossip was a frightening thing, and were afraid of being laughed at or of gaining a bad reputation, or of being called ‘without a conscience, a bad person.’ So, they had to reluctantly say and do some things to cope with the environment. How should these things be measured now? (By the truth principles.) How were things back then, when people’s lives were bound by the notions and fallacies of nonbelievers? By way of example, since you were small, your parents kept indoctrinating you with such words as: ‘When you grow up, you must make us proud; you must bring honor to our family!’ What have these words been to you? An encouragement, or a restraint? A positive influence, or a kind of negative control? The fact is that they are a kind of control. Your parents set a goal for you based on some statement or theory that people think is right and good, making you live your life in service of that goal, and you end up losing your freedom. Why do you end up losing your freedom and falling under its control? Because people think that bringing honor to their family is a good thing that should be done. If you don’t share that thought or aspire to do things that bring honor to your family, you are seen as a foolish waste of space, a good-for-nothing loser, and people will look down on you. In order to be successful, you must study hard, gain ever more skills, and bring honor to your family name. That way, people won’t bully you in the future. Are all the things you do for the sake of this goal not, in effect, shackles that bind you? (They are.) Since pursuing success and bringing honor to the family is what your parents demand, and since they are acting in your best interests so that you live a good life and do**

your family proud, it is only natural that you would aspire to such a lifestyle. But effectively, these things are troubles and shackles of a sort. When people do not understand the truth, they think that these things are positive, the truth, the right way, and therefore, they take them for granted and abide by them or obey them, and they absolutely comply with these words and requirements that come from their parents. If you live by these words, working hard and dedicating your youth and your whole life to them, and finally you get to the top, live a good life, and do your family proud, you may be brilliant to other people, but inside, you are increasingly hollow. You don't know what the point of life is, or what destination the future holds, or what kind of path people should take in life. You haven't understood or gained anything at all about those mysteries of life whose answers you yearn for, and want to know, and want to understand. Have you not effectively been ruined by your parents' good intentions? Have your youth and your whole life not been ruined by your parents' demands, which, in their words, are 'in your best interests'? (They have.) So, are your parents right or wrong to make demands that are 'in your best interests'? It may be that your parents genuinely think that they are acting in your best interests, but are they people who understand the truth? Do they have the truth? (They do not.) Many people spend their whole lives hanging on their parents' words, 'You must make us proud, you must bring honor to the family'—words that inspire them, and that influence them throughout their lives. When the parents say, 'It's in your best interests,' this becomes the impulse behind a person's life, providing a direction and goal to work toward. As a result, no matter how glamorous that person's life, no matter how dignified and successful it is, their life is actually ruined. Is that not so? (It is.) Does this mean that if someone

doesn't live according to their parents' demands, they are not ruined? No; they also have a goal of their own. What goal is that? It is still the same, namely to 'live a good life and do their parents proud,' not because their parents have told them to, but because they have accepted this goal from elsewhere. They still want to live by these words, and do their family proud, and get to the top, and become an honorable, dignified person. Their goal hasn't changed; they still dedicate their whole life, and live their whole life, trying to achieve these things. So, when people do not understand the truth, and accept many so-called correct doctrines, correct statements, and correct views that prevail in society, they turn those correct things into the direction, foundation, and motivation for their own life's efforts. In the end, people live uncompromisingly and unreservedly for the sake of these goals, struggling through life until they die, at which point, some are still unwilling to see the truth. What pitiful lives people lead! However, once you understand the truth, do you not then gradually leave behind these so-called correct things, correct teachings, and correct statements, as well as your parents' expectations of you? Once you gradually leave behind these so-called correct things, and the standard by which you measure things is no longer based on the statements of traditional culture, are you not then no longer bound by those statements? And if you are not bound by these things, do you live freely? You may not then be completely free, but at least the shackles will have been loosened"

(The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. What Is the Truth Reality?).

Reading God's word really touched me. Since I was a child, my mother had always told me to study hard, get ahead, make her proud, and bring honor to the family. To bring honor to my family and make my parents proud, and gain others' praise, I devoted myself entirely to studying and paid no

attention to outside matters, and studying became pretty much my only goal. For so many years, I had been like a studying machine working around the clock. I had no right to choose and no sense of resistance. Though I was praised by my parents and those around me, I was always filled with a sense of emptiness. I'd often ask myself, "Why am I living like this? Is a life like this meaningful?" But I couldn't find an answer, and was often despondent and in pain. Reading God's word made me realize that it was all harm done by Satan. Satan used poisons like "Filial piety is a virtue to be held above all else," and "Stand out above the rest, and bring honor to your ancestors" to bind and control mankind. They were like a yoke that Satan had placed over my body. If I didn't pursue these things, I would be condemned by my family and by society, labeled unambitious and useless. Influenced by this environment, I passively went down the path of pursuing fame and gain. In the pursuit of good grades and degrees, many students developed depression from academic pressure. Some even killed themselves and their lives were ruined. But every time I wanted to quit school to do a duty, I'd feel myself bound and controlled by these satanic poisons. I felt that my parents had spent so much on me that if I quit school, I'd be letting them down and not bringing honor to them. I finally saw that these poisons were Satan's ways of misleading and corrupting us. They distort our direction and goals in life, make us abandon our faith, not do the duty of a created being, and they make us slowly drift from God and betray Him. If it weren't for the revelation of God's word, I never would've seen the harm of these satanic poisons. I would've carried on down this road of no return, losing God's salvation and being destroyed along with Satan in the end. Realizing this, I was filled with gratitude to God. This was God protecting and saving me.

Later, I read more of God's word: "Since being filial to one's parents is not the truth, but only a human responsibility and obligation, what then should you do if your obligation conflicts with your duty? (Prioritize my duty; put duty first.) An obligation is not necessarily one's duty. Choosing to perform one's duty is practicing the truth, whereas fulfilling an obligation is not. If you have this condition, you may fulfill this responsibility or obligation, but if the current environment does not allow it, what should you do? You should say, 'I must do my duty—that is practicing the truth. Being filial to my parents is living by my conscience and it falls short of the practice of the truth.' So, you should prioritize your duty and uphold it. If you have no duty now, and don't work far from home, and live close to your parents, then find ways to take care of them. Do your best to help them live a little better and lessen their suffering. But this also depends on what kind of people your parents are. What should you do if your parents are of poor humanity, if they constantly hinder you from believing in God, and if they keep dragging you away from believing in God and performing your duty? What is the truth that you should practice? (Rejection.) At this time, you must reject them. You have fulfilled your obligation. Your parents don't believe in God, so you have no obligation to show filial respect to them. If they believe in God, then they are family, your parents. If they do not, then you are walking different paths: They believe in Satan and worship the devil king, and they walk the path of Satan; they are people who are walking different paths to those who believe in God. You are no longer a family. They regard believers in God as their adversaries and enemies, so you have no more obligation to take care of them and must cut them off completely. Which is the truth: being filial to one's parents or performing one's duty? Of course,

performing one's duty is the truth. Performing one's duty in God's house is not simply about fulfilling one's obligation and doing what one is supposed to do. It is about performing the duty of a created being. Herein is God's commission; it is your obligation, your responsibility. This is a true responsibility, which is to fulfill your responsibility and obligation before the Creator. This is the Creator's requirement of people, and it is the great matter of life. But showing filial respect to one's parents is merely the responsibility and obligation of a son or daughter. It is certainly not commissioned by God, and less still does it accord with God's requirement. Therefore, between showing filial respect to one's parents and performing one's duty, there is no doubt that performing one's duty, and that alone, is practicing the truth. Performing one's duty as a created being is the truth, and it is a bounden duty. Showing filial respect to one's parents is about being filial to people. It does not mean that one is performing their duty, nor does it mean that they are practicing the truth" (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. What Is the Truth Reality?). God's word shows the principles for dealing with parents: If your parents support you in your faith and duty, you can honor them as much as possible without delaying your duty. But if your parents oppose God and obstruct you in your faith and duty, you should not be constrained by them and should place doing your duty and satisfying God first. My parents pursued money, fame, and gain, following Satan. Their essence is that of devils, and belongs to Satan. In my faith I want to pursue the truth and do a duty. Our paths are completely at odds. If I were to listen to my parents and not do a duty, I would be following Satan and resisting God. Realizing this, I felt a sense of release and knew how to treat my family in line with principles.

After this, I carried on doing a duty in the church and to my surprise, my family went to the school to sort out my quitting on my behalf. I see more and more people are accepting God's kingdom gospel. I am so lucky to join the ranks of those spreading His gospel and to be able to lend my strength to the expansion of God's kingdom gospel. I am so happy for this. I now do my duty with my brothers and sisters, and we fellowship and practice the truth. Though I understand very little of the truth, I feel my corrupt disposition is slowly changing, I am living out some human likeness, and I can spread the gospel and testify to God's work. These are things I never would have learned, no matter how many years I studied in school. I truly feel that doing my duty and expending for God is the most correct choice I have made.

60. Does a Good Friend Look the Other Way?

By Kristina, USA

Sister Barbara and I had known one another for two years, and we had a lot in common, and every time we got chatting, it felt like we could go on forever. We'd often talk about each of our experiences and what we'd gained from them. She'd come find me to talk when she was in any bad state. Whenever I had a problem, I wanted to share it with her as well, and she always fellowshiped with me patiently. I cherished this close relationship we had. I felt that it was great to have a sister by my side who could help and support me.

One day, I inadvertently heard Barbara chatting with some sisters about the great results she had been getting in her gospel preaching lately, how many of those she was preaching to were filled with religious notions, and how, through prayer and reliance on God, she had fellowshiped with them patiently and read them God's words, so that they quickly came to accept God's work of the last days. The sisters looked at her with admiration after hearing that, circling her with all kinds of questions, seeking good paths of practice. I had some doubts and thought, "It's good that her gospel preaching is going so well, but she only talked about how great her results were, not about the specific path she took, nor did she testify to how God guided her in this process. Isn't she just showing off by talking like this?" A few days later, a sister said to me, "Barbara has really good caliber; she hasn't been preaching the gospel for very long, and she's already achieved such great results. She said a leader even called on her to fellowship about her experiences at a gathering." My heart jolted when I heard this: "Why is Barbara saying these things? They aren't edifying or beneficial to others." I thought of how during that period Barbara was

always showing off the good results she'd obtained in performing her duty, and I felt kind of uneasy, thinking, "God has fellowshiped that showing off and exalting oneself is a revelation of a satanic disposition. Others admire Barbara so much now; it will be dangerous to carry on like this. I can't let this go on. I have to find a chance to point this out to her." But whenever I thought about pointing this problem out to her directly, I'd hesitate. I recalled my experiences from a few years before. I saw that my partner, Janie, would often speak words and doctrines, chiding others from a high position, but she'd never dissect or know herself. I pointed out this problem to her, and not only wouldn't she accept it, she even scolded me by bringing up my past failures and transgressions. Afterward, she was reluctant to even acknowledge me. This made things really awkward and painful for me. On another occasion, Sister Roxanna went off topic in her fellowship during a gathering and I pointed this out to her. Later, she opened up to me and said that she'd felt really embarrassed and resistant when I'd pointed out her issue, and that she'd felt I was deliberately trying to make things difficult for her, to the point where she didn't even want to fellowship at later gatherings. Though she went on to seek and reflect on herself, recognizing her problems, I still felt really upset. After this happened, I became very wary of pointing out others' problems. Thinking back on those experiences made me feel even more hesitant about confronting Barbara. I thought about how great our relationship had always been, and wondered: If I pointed out her problem to her, would she feel embarrassed and put on the spot? What would I do if she wouldn't listen and developed a bias against me, if she felt that I was exposing her shortcomings and trying to make things hard for her, and then she refused to acknowledge me? We crossed paths a lot every day, so things would be so uncomfortable. She hadn't always shown off like this. Maybe by reading God's word, she'd be able to

reflect and come to this realization herself. Never mind then, I should just keep quiet.

One day, Barbara told me that some brothers and sisters had made a few suggestions to her. They said that she was partial to showing off in her fellowship and that it would easily make others admire and worship her. This had made her quite uncomfortable. I felt all twisted up inside when I heard her say this. The truth was, I had also seen her showing off lately, but because I was afraid of hurting our relationship, I had just turned a blind eye and said nothing to her. Wasn't this the perfect opportunity? Shouldn't I also speak out about the problems I'd seen? But then I thought about how things were difficult enough already for her. If I also spoke up, would she be unable to take it and become negative? I worried that if I pointed out the problems I had seen to her, she'd think that I was being harsh and distance herself from me, so I thought carefully about what tone of voice to use and how to express myself tactfully so that I wouldn't embarrass her. I brought up examples of how I'd exalted myself and showed off in the past, and then how I'd reflected on it and come to understand that, and only in passing at the end did I briefly touch on her problem. I was afraid of embarrassing her, so I gave her a few words of consolation: "Everyone has corrupt dispositions and it's perfectly normal to reveal that. I do it too. Even after believing in God for so long, I've always been very arrogant and conceited, and I often show off. Don't let it constrain you, you've got to have the right attitude toward yourself." She said nothing in response to this. But then, something happened that unsettled me once again.

At one gathering, Barbara was fellowshipping on her understanding of God's words, and went on to talk about a recent experience she had had in preaching the gospel. She talked about how she had been preaching to a pastor who had believed in the Lord for decades. The man was filled with

religious notions and had believed a lot of rumors. He still wouldn't accept the gospel even after it was preached to him repeatedly. But then she had gone to fellowship and debate with him, and by finding relevant passages of God's words, she had refuted his notions and fallacies one by one, and he gradually let go of his notions and accepted God's work of the last days. When she finished speaking, everyone's attention was drawn to her gospel-preaching experience, and no one focused on pondering and fellowshiping God's words. At the time, I was a little aware: Wasn't this going off topic? Though she was fellowshiping about her gospel-preaching experience, when she'd finished, everyone started admiring her and looking up to her. Wasn't this her showing off? I wanted to point this out to her and get her to stop talking about this topic, but I just couldn't get the words out, thinking, "If I interrupt her in front of this many people, won't she be really embarrassed? It is true that Barbara has gotten some results in her gospel preaching, so if I do say this to her, will everyone think it's because I'm jealous and intentionally making things difficult for her? Maybe her intentions are good and she's not trying to show off?" So I didn't speak up, but I couldn't calm myself down enough to ponder God's words, and my fellowship was unenlightened as I just gave a few uninspired words, and so the gathering came to a close.

I spent that evening tossing and turning in bed, unable to sleep. I just couldn't stop thinking about the things Barbara had said to show off in the gathering, and about the looks of admiration on everyone's faces. What she had fellowshiped hadn't given the others any better understanding of God's words, rather, she had drawn everyone's attention to her gospel preaching, and so the gathering had not achieved anything good. Fearing embarrassing her, I had said nothing and failed to protect church life. Wasn't I just being a people pleaser? I recalled a passage of God's words:

“You should examine yourself carefully to see whether you are a correct person. Are your goals and intentions made with Me in mind? Are all your words and actions said and done in My presence? I examine all of your thoughts and ideas. Do you not feel guilty? ... Do you think that next time you will be able to make up for the eating and drinking that Satan has taken away this time? Thus, you now see it clearly; is this something for which you can compensate? Can you make up for the time lost? You must diligently examine yourselves to see why no eating and drinking was done in the past few meetings, and who caused this trouble. You must fellowship one by one until it is clear. If such a person is not strongly constrained, then your brothers and sisters will not understand, and then it will just happen again. Your spiritual eyes are closed; too many of you are blind! Moreover, those who do see are careless about it. They do not stand and speak up, and they, too, are blind. Those who see but do not speak up are mute. There are many here with handicaps” (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. Utterances of

Christ in the Beginning, Chapter 13). God’s words described my state perfectly. Barbara had gone off topic in her fellowship, wasted everyone’s time, and impacted the effectiveness of the gathering, and yet I’d just looked on silently. I kept thinking to myself, “I clearly knew Barbara was going off topic, so why did I not protect church life? Why did I choose to remain silent and be a people pleaser?” Firstly, I was uncertain as to whether Barbara’s actions were exalting herself and showing off. It was true that she had some experiences in preaching the gospel, and fellowshiping on these experiences could be beneficial to the others, so could her fellowshiping like this be considered showing off? Secondly, I was worried that I wasn’t seeing things clearly, that my speaking up would constrain her, and that the others would think I was saying these things out of jealousy.

At the gathering the next day, I brought up my confusion and sought help from a few sisters. We read a passage of God's words together: **"Exalting and testifying about themselves, flaunting themselves, trying to make people think highly of them and worship them—corrupt mankind is capable of these things. This is how people instinctively react when they are governed by their satanic natures, and it is common to all of corrupt mankind. How do people usually exalt and testify about themselves? How do they achieve the aim of making people think highly of them and worship them? They testify to how much work they have done, how much they have suffered, how much they have expended themselves, and what price they have paid. They exalt themselves by talking about their capital, which gives them a higher, firmer, more secure place in people's minds, so that more people appreciate, think highly of, admire, and even worship, look up to, and follow them. To achieve this aim, people do many things that testify to God on the surface, but essentially exalt and testify about themselves. Is acting that way reasonable? They are beyond the purview of rationality and have no shame, that is, they unabashedly testify to what they have done for God and how much they have suffered for Him. They even flaunt their gifts, talents, experience, special skills, their clever techniques for worldly dealings, the means they use to toy with people, and so on. Their method of exalting and testifying about themselves is to flaunt themselves and belittle others. They also camouflage and package themselves, hiding their weaknesses, shortcomings, and deficiencies from people so that they only ever see their brilliance. They do not even dare to tell other people when they feel negative; they lack the courage to open up and fellowship with them, and when they do something wrong, they do their utmost to conceal it and cover it up.**

Never do they mention the harm they have caused to the work of the church in the course of doing their duty. When they have made some minor contribution or achieved some small success, however, they are quick to show it off. They cannot wait to let the whole world know how capable they are, how high their caliber is, how exceptional they are, and how much better they are than normal people. Is this not a way of exalting and testifying about themselves?” (The Word, Vol. 4. Exposing Antichrists.

Item Four: They Exalt and Testify About Themselves). Through the exposure of God's words, I understood that one sign of antichrists exalting and testifying to themselves is their flaunting of their gifts, strengths, contributions, and achievements before others to make people think of them as possessing talents and caliber, and gain their respect and admiration. Preaching the gospel and testifying to God is essentially a positive thing. Barbara had strengths in preaching the gospel, and if she could have fellowshiped on the difficulties she had encountered, how she then relied on God and experienced His work, what she had gained and learned from this, and the good paths of practice she summed up, that fellowship would have been edifying. But Barbara only talked about how she had suffered while preaching the gospel, and how she paid a price. Nobody listening to her experiences gained any greater understanding of God or any clarity on how to practice or approach different difficulties. Instead, they just started looking up to and admiring her more and came to feel that she had experiences, gifts and caliber in preaching the gospel, and was more ardent than others. Everyone praised and envied her and felt inadequate. So, the results of showing off and exalting and testifying to God were not the same. Through fellowshiping, my previous views were confirmed, and I determined that most of what Barbara said wasn't testifying to God, and rather was said to elevate herself and show off. She was revealing an

antichrist's disposition, which would incur God's disgust and hatred. The sisters also reminded me that Barbara might not yet be aware of her behavior, and that having seen this, I should lovingly point this out to help her. I shouldn't be a people pleaser just to protect my relationship with her. The sisters' words filled me with shame, and I decided to fellowship with Barbara as soon as possible.

After the gathering came to an end, I just couldn't calm myself down. I had seen Barbara's issues before but not dared to point them out to her, and even when I did say something, I just skimmed over the problem without really achieving anything, causing Barbara to never truly reflect on or become aware of her problem. I was filled with unease and guilt at these thoughts, and I couldn't help but ask myself, "I'm normally so cheerful and lively around Barbara and tell her everything, so why am I finding it so hard to point out her problem? Why can't I get the words out?" In my seeking and reflection, I read these words of God: **"You are all well-educated. You all pay attention to being refined and understated in your speech, as well as to the manner in which you speak: You are tactful, and have learned not to do damage to the dignity and pride of others. In your words and actions, you leave people room to maneuver. You do everything you can to put people at ease. You do not expose their scars or shortcomings, and you try not to hurt them or embarrass them. Such is the interpersonal principle by which most people act. And what kind of principle is this? (It is being a people pleaser; it is deceitful and slippery.) It is conniving, slippery, treacherous, and insidious. Hidden behind people's smiling faces are a lot of malicious, insidious, and despicable things"** (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. Six Indicators of Life Growth). **"Those who walk the middle path are the most insidious people of all. They offend no one, they are smooth and slick,**

they are good at playing along in all situations, and no one can see their faults. They are like living Satans!” (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. Only by Practicing the Truth Can One Cast Off the Shackles of a Corrupt Disposition).

“There is a tenet in philosophies for worldly dealings that says, ‘Keeping silent on the faults of good friends makes for a long and good friendship.’ It means that in order to preserve a friendly relationship, one must keep silent about their friend’s problems, even if they see them clearly—that they should abide by the principles of not striking people in the face or calling out their shortcomings. They are to deceive each other, hide from each other, engage in intrigue with each other; and though they know with crystal clarity what sort of person the other is, they do not say it outright, but employ cunning methods to preserve their friendly relationship. Why would one want to preserve such relationships? It is about not wanting to make enemies in this society, within one’s group, which would mean subjecting oneself often to dangerous situations. Knowing someone will become your enemy and harm you after you have called out their shortcomings or hurt them, and not wishing to put yourself in such a situation, you employ the tenet of philosophies for worldly dealings that runs, ‘If you strike others, don’t strike them in the face; if you call others out, don’t call out their shortcomings.’ In light of this, if two people are in such a relationship, do they count as true friends? (No.) They are not true friends, much less each other’s confidant. So, what sort of relationship is this, exactly? Is it not a fundamental social relationship? (It is.) In such social relationships, people cannot offer their feelings, nor have deep exchanges, nor speak about whatever they wish. They cannot say out loud what is in their heart, or the problems they see in the other, or words that would benefit the other. Instead, they pick nice things to say,

to keep the other's favor. They dare not speak the truth or uphold the principles, lest it give rise to animosity toward them in others. When no one is threatening to someone, does that person not live in relative ease and peace? Is this not people's goal in promoting the saying, 'If you strike others, don't strike them in the face; if you call others out, don't call out their shortcomings'? (It is.) Clearly, this is a cunning, deceptive way of existence with an element of defensiveness, whose goal is self-preservation. People who live like this have no confidants, no close friends with whom they can say whatever they like. They are defensive with each other, and calculating, and strategic, each taking what they need from the relationship. Is this not so? At its root, the goal of 'If you strike others, don't strike them in the face; if you call others out, don't call out their shortcomings' is to keep from offending others and making enemies, to protect oneself by not causing hurt to anyone. It is a technique and method one adopts to keep themselves from being hurt. Looking at these several facets of its essence, is the demand of people's moral conduct 'If you strike others, don't strike them in the face; if you call others out, don't call out their shortcomings' a noble one? Is it a positive one? (No.) Then, what does it teach people? That you must not upset or hurt anyone, otherwise, you are the one who will end up getting hurt.... Does it teach people to be wise when interacting with others, to be able to differentiate people, to see people and things in the right way, and to interact with people in a wise way? Does it teach you that if you meet good people, people with humanity, you should treat them with sincerity, provide them help if you are able to, and if you cannot, you should then be tolerant and treat them properly, learn to tolerate their shortcomings, put up with their misunderstandings and judgments of you, and learn from their strengths and good qualities? Is

that what it teaches people? (No.) So, what comes in the end of what this saying teaches people? Does it make people more honest, or more deceitful? It results in people becoming more deceitful; people's hearts grow further apart, the distance between people widens, and people's relationships become complicated; it is equivalent to a complication in people's social relationships. Heart-to-heart communication between people is lost, and a mutually guarded mindset arises. Can people's relationships still be normal this way? Will the social climate improve? (No.) So, that's why the saying 'If you strike others, don't strike them in the face; if you call others out, don't call out their shortcomings' is obviously wrong. Teaching people to do this cannot make them live out normal humanity; moreover, it cannot make people aboveboard, upright, or candid. It absolutely cannot achieve anything positive" (The

Word, Vol. 6. On the Pursuit of the Truth I. What It Means to Pursue the Truth (8)). By reading God's words, I saw that I was relying on satanic philosophies for worldly dealings in how I interacted with Barbara, such as "Keeping silent on the faults of good friends makes for a long and good friendship," "If you strike others, don't strike them in the face; if you call others out, don't call out their shortcomings," and "One more friend means one more path; one more enemy means one more obstacle." Until that point, I had regarded these philosophies as principles by which to interact with people. I had thought that behaving like this was the only way to maintain interpersonal relations, not offend others, and not create trouble for myself. Through the exposure of God's words, I finally saw that these philosophies are deceitful, sly, and treacherous ways to live, that they make people guarded against one another, create distance between them, and prevent sincere interaction, much less do they allow for love of one another. Though interacting in this way avoids offending others or creating trouble for ourselves, it prevents us

from making true friends, and only allows us to become ever more fake and deceitful. I also came to understand that one should be candid when interacting with others, and that when you see somebody has a problem, you should help them out of love as best you can. Even if in the moment, they can't accept it and misunderstand you, you still must adhere to those principles and set the right intentions when approaching them. I thought back on my interactions with Barbara. On several occasions I'd clearly seen her showing off in front of others, and that the others thought very highly of her, but I was afraid of wounding her ego by pointing out her problem, and that she'd then disregard me. So, to keep on good terms with her, I just looked on without saying anything to her or helping her as she revealed corruption, which caused her to not reflect on and know her problems and later go back to her old ways. Living by these satanic philosophies, I had only wanted to protect our relationship, for Barbara to say I was an understanding and empathetic person. I had not considered her life entry. If only I had pointed out the problems I had seen to her sooner, maybe she would have had some understanding of her corrupt disposition and wouldn't have said such unreasonable things during gatherings. I had become a people pleaser to protect our relationship. This was truly harmful behavior! I then thought of another sister I had interacted with. I saw that she was often perfunctory in her duty, and that when the others pointed out her problems to her, she'd argue back and be unable to accept it. I had wanted to fellowship with her to help her reflect on herself, but I felt that she was quite old, and if I pointed out her problems, I would hurt her ego and make her think of me as overly harsh. So I just turned a blind eye to her problems and remained outwardly cheerful, chatty, and friendly with her. It was only after she was dismissed for being perfunctory in her duty that I regretted not helping her sooner. When she was about to leave, I fellowshipped about the

problems I had seen with her. Though she'd come to recognize her problems, she reproached me for not pointing them out to her sooner and said that if she'd been able to mend her ways earlier, she maybe wouldn't have been dismissed and reassigned. When this occurred to me, I finally saw that living by philosophies for worldly dealings and being a people pleaser is not the same as being a good person. Those who do so are not showing any sincerity or love toward others, they are being selfish and deceitful. This kind of person is living out a satanic disposition, and it disgusts God. Barbara had always been so sincere with me, but I had just relied on these philosophies while interacting with her and not practiced the truth. I had only considered how not to offend her and how to preserve the good image she had of me, and when I saw her revealing a corrupt disposition, I just disregarded it. Could I call myself a good friend while acting like this? "Keeping silent on the faults of good friends makes for a long and good friendship" was truly a devilish saying of Satan. It was so harmful, and I no longer wanted to live by it.

In my seeking and reflection, I realized that there was another reason I didn't dare point out Barbara's problem: I held a mistaken view. I had always thought that pointing out another's problem was exposing a flaw of theirs, that it would hurt their ego, likely offend them, and that it was a thankless act. So with Barbara, I always feared that she would be offended if I pointed out her problem and that it would ruin our relationship, which made it very difficult for me to practice the truth. So I sought God, asking Him to guide me in resolving this problem of mine. In my seeking, I read these words of God: **"God demands that people tell the truth, say what they think, and not trick, mislead, make fun of, satirize, deride, mock, or constrict others, or expose their weaknesses, or hurt them. Are these not the principles of speech? What does it mean to say one should not**

expose people's weaknesses? It means not to get dirt on other people. Do not hold on to their past mistakes or shortcomings in order to judge or condemn them. This is the least you should do. On the proactive side, how is constructive speech expressed? It is mainly encouraging, orienting, guiding, exhorting, understanding, and comforting. Also, in some special instances, it becomes necessary to directly expose other people's errors and prune them, so that they gain knowledge of the truth and desire to repent. Only then is the due effect achieved. This way of practicing is of great benefit to people. It is a real help to them, and it is constructive for them, is it not? ... And what, in sum, is the principle behind speaking? It is this: Say what's in your heart, and speak of your true experiences and what you really think. These words are the most beneficial to people, they provide for people, they help them, they are positive. Refuse to say those fake words, those words that do not benefit or edify people; this will avoid harming them or tripping them up, plunging them into negativity, and having a negative effect. You must say positive things. You must strive to help people as much as you can, to benefit them, to provide to them, to produce in them true faith in God; and you must allow people to be helped, and to gain much, from your experiences of God's words and the way you solve problems, and to be able to understand the path of experiencing the work of God and entering the truth reality, allowing them to have life entry and making their life grow—which is all the effect of your words having principles, and being edifying to people” (The Word, Vol. 6. On the Pursuit of the Truth I. What It Means to Pursue the Truth (3)). “If you have a good relationship with a brother or a sister, and they ask you to point out what is wrong with them, how should you do it? This relates to what approach you take to the matter. ... According to the truth principles,

then, how should you approach this matter? What action accords with the truth? How many relevant principles are there? Firstly, at the very least, do not cause others to stumble. You must first consider the other's weaknesses and what way of speaking with them will not cause them to stumble. This is the very least that ought to be considered. Next, if you know they are someone who truly believes in God and can accept the truth, then when you notice they have a problem, you should take the initiative to help them. If you do nothing and laugh at them, this constitutes hurting and harming them. Someone who does so has no conscience or reason, and they have no love for others. Those who have a bit of conscience and reason cannot laugh at their brothers and sisters. They should think of different ways to help them resolve their problem. They should let the person understand what happened and where their mistake was. Whether they can repent is their own matter; we will have lived up to our responsibility. Even if they do not repent now, sooner or later there will be a day when they come to their senses, and they will not complain about you or accuse you. At the least, how you treat your brothers and sisters cannot be below the standards of conscience and reason. Do not indebt yourself to others; help them to the extent you can. This is what people should do. People who can treat their brothers and sisters with love and in accordance with the truth principles are the best kind of people. They are also the most kind-hearted. Of course, true brothers and sisters are those people who can accept and practice the truth. If a person only believes in God to eat their fill of loaves or to receive blessings, but does not accept the truth, then they are not a brother or sister. You must treat true brothers and sisters according to the truth principles. No matter how they believe in God or what path they are on, you should help them in the spirit of

love. What is the minimum effect one should achieve? First, it is not causing them to stumble, and not letting them become negative; second, it is helping them, and making them turn back from the wrong path; and third, it is making them understand the truth and choose the right path. These three sorts of effect can only be achieved by helping them in the spirit of love. If you do not have true love, you cannot achieve these three sorts of effect, and you could only achieve one or two at best. These three sorts of effect are also the three principles for helping others. You know these three principles and have a handle on them, but how are they actually enacted? Do you truly understand the other's difficulty? Is this not another problem? You must also think, 'What is the origin of their difficulty? Am I capable of helping them? If my stature is too small and I cannot solve their problem, and I speak carelessly, I may point them onto the wrong path. Beyond that, how is this person's comprehension ability, and what is their caliber? Are they opinionated? Do they have spiritual understanding? Can they accept the truth? Do they pursue the truth? If they see that I am more capable than them, and I fellowship with them, will jealousy or negativity arise in them?' These questions must all be considered. After you have considered and gained clarity on these questions, go fellowship with that person, read several passages of God's words that apply to their problem, and enable them to understand the truth in God's words and find the path to practice. Then, the problem will be solved, and they will get out of their difficulty. Is this a simple matter? This is no simple matter. If you do not understand the truth, then no matter how much you say, it will be of no use. If you do understand the truth, you can enlighten and benefit them with just a few sentences'' (The Word, Vol. 3. The

Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. Only by Pursuing the Truth Can One Resolve Their Notions

and Misunderstandings of God). From God's words I came to understand that if you are exposing a person's shortcomings, you prey on their weaknesses to judge and condemn them, and your intentions are to ridicule, mock, and denounce them, and this disgusts God. But if you point out a person's problems and shortcomings with the intention of helping them, this is edifying, and is an expression of having love for others and a sense of responsibility for their lives. If the person pursues the truth, then with the help of others, they will be able to reflect on themselves and seek the truth to resolve their problems, and they will make progress in their life entry. However, some people are resistant to and repulsed by being pruned and having their issues pointed out. This shows that they don't accept the truth and that their disposition is averse to the truth. Before, I had believed that pointing out others' problems was the same as exposing their shortcomings and that it was a thankless task. This view was completely fallacious. I also came to understand that there are principles for helping others by pointing out their problems. It's not only about pointing out people's problems to them directly with good intentions and enthusiasm, no matter who they are. Rather, we must do it according to the truth principles, considering a person's humanity and their comprehension ability, whether they are a correct person, whether they can accept the truth, how to point out their problems in a way that will achieve results, not trip them up, or cause them to become negative. What's most important is that we should consider the relevant truths, help others understand the truth and God's intention by pointing things out to them, and give them a path of practice. Only by doing this are we genuinely helping people. At this point I finally realized that I hadn't been getting good results when I'd been pointing out others' problems before because I hadn't been seeking the truth principles. Just like when I saw Janie frequently speaking words and doctrines, scolding others

from her high position, and never talking about knowing herself—I pointed out her problems to her directly, but in fact, I had come to understand through our interactions that she wasn’t a person who could accept the truth. I knew that her understanding of the truth was distorted, and that she placed a lot of importance on status. For these reasons, pointing out her problems to her directly was foolish of me and it failed to achieve good results. She was later revealed to have consistently not accepted the truth or the reminders and help offered by brothers and sisters. She would often seek leverage over leaders and workers to attack and judge them, and eventually, she was cleared out when she was determined to be an evil person. As for Roxanna, she valued her pride too much, was slow in understanding and entering into the truth, and had no experience in being pruned. But I didn’t take into account her stature and talked about her digressing in her fellowship on God’s words in front of everybody. As a result, she was unaccepting and became negative for a while. Later on, with the help and support of other brothers and sisters, she was able to amend this state. Having come to understand this aspect of the principles, I no longer felt afraid to point out Barbara’s problem. Barbara could accept the truth, and she was a correct person. I should help her with love and in accordance with principles in order to prevent her from going down the wrong path. In my heart, I prayed to God, seeking how I could fellowship with Barbara effectively in a way that’s not constraining and can help her understand the truth and truly know herself.

For a period after that, I’d seek out and ponder the words of God which expose those who show off and exalt themselves. I looked for a time to open up to Barbara in fellowship and to talk to her about her problems that I’d noticed during this period, as well as to fellowship with her on the nature and consequences of showing off, and on the attitude with which

God treats this kind of behavior. After I fellowshiped with her, Barbara finally realized the seriousness of her problem, realized that she was controlled by an obsession with status, that she liked having a place in people's hearts and having people admire her, and that this kind of pursuit disgusts God. In a later gathering, she fellowshiped and dissected her behavior of showing off and exalting herself, which allowed everyone to gain some discernment. Seeing that Barbara was able to reflect on and recognize her problem, hate herself and truly repent, I felt happy. But at the same time, I felt guilty. I regretted that it had taken me until now to fellowship and point this out to her. She didn't develop a bias against me because I pointed out and exposed her problem, nor did our relationship break down, instead, we became closer than before. I understood that only by living by God's word and interacting with people according to the truth principles can one feel a sense of peace.

61. My Affections Clouded My Judgment

A Letter to My Wife

By Zhou Ming, China

Dear Huijian,

I got your letter. In your letter you said that our children have been cleared out from the church. I just couldn't accept this at first. I remember a few years ago when I came home, Xiaotao and Xiaomin were still gathering and performing duties, so how did they come to be cleared out? Though they didn't really pursue the truth, they were both true of faith. Was the leader asking too much of them? Was clearing them out a mistake? I even aimed my complaints at you. Our children were following the trends of the world, just cared about chasing money, and weren't willing to do a duty or eat and drink God's words. I wondered why you hadn't made an effort to fellowship with them. If only I'd been home, I could've helped and supported them more and I wouldn't have let them get to the point of being cleared out. During those days, these were the kinds of thoughts that filled my head, and I'd lie in bed at night, unable to sleep, haunted by the happy memories of us all together, singing God's praises and eating and drinking His word. I remember I said to you that I hoped our family could all diligently pursue the truth, be saved by God, and live on in His kingdom, and how wonderful this would be. I'd never expected that as God's work was about to be concluded, our children would be revealed as disbelievers and cleared out from the church. Didn't this mean that they'd lost their chance at salvation? I became more upset the more I thought about it. When I saw the disasters growing and the pandemic worsening, this made me especially worried about our children's futures. I even wanted to write a letter to the church leader, asking whether our children could stay on to

labor for the church, so there would be some glimmer of hope for their salvation. Having spent years away on duty due to the CCP's pursuit, I felt I'd not cared for them and that I'd not fulfilled my responsibilities as their father. I felt that I'd owed them. Huijuan, did you know that while I was living in that state, my heart was filled with darkness and despondency, and I couldn't focus on my duty? I realized my state was wrong, so I prayed to God, "God! It pains me to know that my children have been cleared out from the church. Though I know You permit this and that I should submit, I just can't let go of my children and I feel I've owed them so much. God, please enlighten me to understand the truth on this matter and not be constrained by my affections."

After praying, I read God's word: **"Were there particular details to Job's practices? First, let's talk about how he treated his children. His aim was to submit to God's arrangements and orchestrations in all things; he did not try to force the things God did not do, nor did he have calculations and plans based on human will. He hearkened and waited on God's arrangements and orchestrations in all things. This was a general principle. ... How did Job treat his children? He just fulfilled his responsibility as a father, sharing the gospel and fellowshiping on the truth with them. However, whether or not they listened to him, whether or not they obeyed, Job didn't force them to believe in God—he didn't drag them kicking and screaming, or interfere in their lives. Their ideas and opinions were different to his own, so he did not interfere with what they did, and did not interfere with what sort of path they were taking. Did Job seldom speak to his children about believing in God? He certainly would have had enough words with them about this, but they refused to listen, and did not accept them. What was Job's attitude toward that? 'I have fulfilled my**

responsibility; as for what kind of path they take, that is up to what they choose, and it is up to God's orchestrations and arrangements. If God does not work on them, or move them, I will not try to force them.' Therefore, Job did not pray for them before God, or cry tears of anguish over them, or fast for them or suffer in any way at all. He did not do these things. Why did Job not do any of these things? Because none of these were ways of submitting to God's sovereignty and arrangements; they all came out of human ideas and were ways of actively forcing matters. ... His method of practice was correct; in every way he practiced, in the viewpoint, attitude and state with which he treated everything, he was always in a position and state of submitting, waiting, seeking, and then achieving knowledge. This attitude is very important. If people never have this kind of attitude in anything they do, and have especially strong personal ideas and place personal intentions and benefit before all else, then are they really submitting? (No.) In such people genuine submission cannot be seen; they are unable to achieve genuine submission" (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. The Principles of the Practice of Submitting to God). Reading this passage of God's word, I felt humiliated and ashamed. Job didn't rely on affections in handling his children and he was able to be rational. Though he hoped that his children would believe in God and keep themselves from evil so that they'd not sin too much and walk the road to destruction, when he saw that they didn't worship God and feasted every day, he didn't force them to change their ways or compel them to take a certain path. He just submitted to God's orchestration and arrangements and refrained from sinning against God. Later, when his children were crushed to death, Job did not blame God. I saw that in handling his children, Job feared and submitted to God. And yet, when I found out my son had left the

church for worldly pursuits and my daughter had been cleared out, I focused on my fleshly affection for family. I thought of how they could hold onto some hope of being blessed. No matter whether their faith was sincere or not, or whether they pursued the truth, I just wanted them to be able to stay in the church. I even wanted to have the leader give them another chance, letting them stay on to labor for the church in any way possible. When it came to my children, I just wanted to use human methods to salvage things. I wasn't submitting to God's sovereignty or arrangements. Especially when I found out my children were defined as disbelievers, I not only didn't seek the truth to discern their essences, but lived under a misunderstanding, doubting whether the leader had handled things fairly, and I lost my drive for my duty. My heart only had room for my children; God had no place in it. I recalled one of the clear requirements in God's administrative decrees which says: **"Kin who are not of the faith (your children, your husband or wife, your sisters or your parents, and so on) should not be forced into the church. God's household is not short of members, and there is no need to make up its numbers with people who have no use. All those who do not believe gladly must not be led into the church. This decree is directed at all people. You should check, monitor, and remind each other of this matter; no one may violate it"** (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. The Ten Administrative Decrees That Must Be Obeyed by God's Chosen People in the Age of Kingdom). I remember that you said in your letter that the brothers and sisters had supported them a lot, and that they themselves had chosen to not repent, and never read God's words or gathered for a long time. This already showed that they were disbelievers, yet I ignored God's words and wanted to rely on my affections to keep them in the church. I was so rebellious! I can't keep relying on my affections. In

handling our children, I have to be like Job, seek the truth, and submit to God's orchestration and arrangements. This is the sense that I should have.

Afterward, I thought about all the people that had been revealed and eliminated in recent years. I didn't have any notions about that as I knew that God is righteous and that in His house, the truth reigns supreme and no person is wronged. But when I saw our children cleared out, why did I not submit to God or praise His righteousness, relying instead on my affections and doubting whether the church had handled things fairly?

I went on to read God's word: **"What characterizes feelings? Certainly not anything positive. It is a focus on physical relationships and satisfying the predilections of the flesh. Favoritism, defending other people's shortcomings, doting, pampering, and indulging all fall under feelings. Some people place great stock in feelings, they react to whatever happens to them based on their feelings; in their hearts, they know full well this is wrong, and yet are still incapable of being objective, much less of acting according to principle. When people are always constrained by feelings, are they capable of practicing the truth? This is extremely difficult! Many people's inability to practice the truth comes down to feelings; they regard feelings as especially important, they put them in the first place. Are they people who love the truth? Certainly not. What are feelings, in essence? They are a kind of corrupt disposition. The manifestations of feelings can be described using several words: favoritism, unprincipled protection of others, maintenance of physical relationships, and partiality; these are what feelings are. What are the likely consequences of people's having feelings and living by them? Why does God most loathe people's feelings? Some people are always constrained by their feelings, they cannot put the truth into practice, and though they wish to submit to**

God, they cannot, so they feel tormented by their feelings. There are many people who understand the truth but cannot put it into practice; this, too, is because they are constrained by feelings. For example, some people leave their homes to perform their duties, but they are always thinking about their family, day and night, and they cannot perform their duties well. Is this not a problem? Some people have secret crushes, and there is only a place for that person in their hearts, which affects their performance of their duties. Is this not a problem? Some people admire and idolize others; they won't listen to anyone except for that person, to the extent that they don't even listen to what God says. Even if someone else fellowships the truth with them, they won't accept it; they only listen to that person's words, to their idol's words. Some people have an idol in their hearts, and they do not permit other people to speak about or touch their idol. If anyone talks about their idol's problems, they become angry and have to defend their idol and turn that person's words around. They won't allow their idol to suffer an injustice undefended and they do everything in their power to protect their idol's reputation; through their words, their idol's wrongs become right, and they do not let people speak true words or expose them. This is not justice; these are called feelings" (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. What Is the Truth Reality?). From God's word I understood that affections belong to a satanic corrupt disposition, and that by relying on affections, not only can we not view things or people fairly, but we develop biases and favoritism, and we will contravene principles to protect our fleshly relationships. Just like when I learned Xiaotao and Xiaomin had been cleared out, I didn't seek God's intention or ponder the lessons I should learn, or the truth I should enter into. Instead, I conjured up the idea that the leader was acting without principles. I wanted to follow through by

writing a letter to the leader, asking for my children to be let off the hook and allowed to keep doing a duty in the church. I saw that acting sentimentally with regard to my children was a form of bias and favoritism, and was without principle. After all these years in the faith, I knew that the church has principles for clearing people out and that it is done based on a person's consistent behavior rather than a momentary manifestation. Only if a person doesn't repent after extensive help and fellowship, and they are eventually defined as an evil person or a disbeliever, will they be dealt with according to principles, and only with approval from at least 80% of the church can they be cleared out. This is fair and in line with the truth. I thought of our son and how I'd asked him why he came out to do a duty. He told me, "I came out to do a duty because I missed you." I saw that he had no place for God in his heart, that he didn't love the truth at all, and that he wasn't doing his duty to pursue the truth. When he saw that God's house continually fellowshiped on the truth and this couldn't satisfy his desires, he wanted to give up on his duty. The leaders had fellowshiped with him so much but he never listened. After returning home, when he had time, he would rather play games than read God's word. He was a disbeliever! Likewise, our daughter believed for over a decade but rarely ate or drank God's words and her viewpoints were like those of nonbelievers. Though she did her duty occasionally, whenever it didn't align with her notions or it affected her interests, she wouldn't do it. She didn't have true faith in God and was, in essence, a disbeliever too.

I recalled a passage of God's words: **"When someone is truly defined in God's eyes as having withdrawn, it is actually not merely a matter of them having left His house, of them not being seen anymore, or of them having been stricken from the church rolls. The fact is that if a person does not read God's words, then regardless of the magnitude of their**

faith, and regardless of whether they recognize themselves to be a believer in God, it proves that they do not acknowledge in their heart that God exists, nor that His words are the truth. To God, that person has already withdrawn and is no longer counted as a member of His house. Those who do not read God's words are one sort of people who have withdrawn. ... There is another sort: those who refuse to do duties. Whatever request God's house makes of them, whatever kind of work it would have them do, whichever duty it would have them do, in large and small matters alike, even in something so simple as having them pass along an occasional message—they do not want to do it. They, self-proclaimed believers in God, cannot even do tasks that a nonbeliever could be sought out to help with. This is a refusal to accept the truth and a refusal to do a duty. No matter how the brothers and sisters exhort them, they refuse and do not accept it; when the church arranges some duty for them to do, they ignore it and give copious excuses to decline it. These are people who refuse to do duties. To God, such people have already withdrawn. Their withdrawal is not a matter of God's house having cleared them out or having stricken them from its rolls; rather, it is that they themselves do not have true faith—they do not acknowledge themselves to be believers in God” (The Word, Vol. 4.

Exposing Antichrists. Item Twelve: They Want to Withdraw When They Have No Status or No Hope of Gaining Blessings). **“Who is Satan, who are demons, and who are God's enemies if not resisters who do not believe in God? Are they not those people who are rebellious against God? Are they not those who claim to have faith, yet who lack truth? Are they not those who merely seek to obtain blessings while being unable to bear witness for God? You still mingle with those demons today and treat them with conscience and love, but in this case are you not extending good intentions toward**

Satan? Are you not in league with demons? If people have made it to this point and are still unable to distinguish between good and evil, and continue to blindly be loving and merciful without any desire to seek God's intentions or being able in any way to take God's intentions as their own, then their endings will be all the more wretched" (The Word, Vol.

1. The Appearance and Work of God. God and Man Will Enter Into Rest Together).

Huijuan, having read these words of God I realized how pitifully stupid I'd been. I'd wanted to use human means to keep our children in the church, thinking maybe they'd survive in the end if they labored a little in the church. But in light of God's word, I see how absurd my thinking was. In fact, all those who believe in God but don't read His word or do a duty are not recognized as believers by God at all, even if they haven't yet been cleared out, as they've already withdrawn in God's eyes. I compared this with our children's behavior. After all his years of faith, Xiaotao still followed worldly trends, and didn't read God's words or do a duty. I saw that he didn't love the truth at all and was essentially averse to the truth and a disbeliever. Xiaomin had been in the faith for years but never focused on reading God's words, and on this condition alone she could have been cleared out as a disbeliever. God's house does not need people like these to make up its numbers, much less the laboring of such disbelievers. Even if the church hadn't cleared them out, God would not have recognized them as believers. With these realizations, I fully understood that Xiaotao and Xiaomin being cleared out was completely in line with God's words and the truth principles. I should have discernment of them, stand by God in viewing things in line with the truth principles, and submit to God's sovereignty and arrangements. But I relied on my affections to handle our children, and without knowing the facts, I suspected the leader had wrongly cleared them out and I wanted these disbelievers to stay and make up the

church's numbers. I was always protecting my fleshly relationships. Was I not mingling with demons, extending good intentions and love toward Satan, just as God exposed? I couldn't tell right from wrong, was associating with demons, and was essentially resisting God.

I also wondered why I felt so deeply guilty and self-reproach when I learned our children were cleared out, and why I felt I'd not fulfilled my responsibilities as a father, suspecting that if only I'd found the time to return home and fellowship and help them more, they'd never have gotten to this point. Huijuan, is your state the same as mine? Later, I read God's word dissecting and exposing traditional thinking and I saw that I'd been influenced by the traditional notion of "To feed without teaching is the father's fault." God's words say: **"What sort of expression is 'To feed without teaching is the father's fault'? In what way is it wrong? What this expression means is that if children are disobedient or immature, it is the father's responsibility, which is to say that the parents didn't educate them well. But is this actually the case? (No.) Some parents comport themselves in a proper manner, and yet their sons are hoodlums and their daughters are prostitutes. The man playing the father's role gets so angry and says: 'To feed without teaching is the father's fault. I have spoiled them!' Is this the right thing to say or not? (No, it's wrong.) In what way is it wrong? If you can understand what is wrong with this expression, it proves that you understand the truth and that you understand what is wrong about the problem that lies within this expression. If you do not understand the truth in this matter, then you cannot explain this matter clearly"** (The Word, Vol. 4. Exposing Antichrists. Item Nine (Part One)). **"The first thing to make clear is that it's wrong to say, 'Children's failure to follow the right path is to do with their parents.' Whoever it is, if they are a certain kind of person, they will walk a**

certain path. Is this not certain? (Yes.) The path a person takes determines what they are. The path they take and the kind of person they become are up to them. These are things that are predestined, innate, and have to do with the person's nature. So what's the use of parental education? Can it govern a person's nature? (No.) Parental education cannot govern human nature and cannot solve the problem of which path a person takes. What is the only education that parents can provide? Some simple behaviors in their children's daily life, some fairly superficial thoughts and rules of comportment—these are things that have something to do with parents. Before their children reach adulthood, parents should fulfill their due responsibility, which is to educate their children to follow the right path, study hard, and strive to be able to rise above the rest after they grow up, not to do bad things or to become bad people. Parents should also regulate their children's behavior, teach them to be polite and to greet their elders whenever they see them, and teach them other things relating to behavior—this is the responsibility that parents ought to fulfill. Taking care of their child's life and educating them with some basic rules of comportment—that is what parental influence amounts to. As for their child's personality, parents cannot teach this. Some parents are laid-back and do everything at a leisurely pace, whereas their children are very impatient and can't stay still even for a short while. They go off on their own to make a living when they are 14 or 15 years old, they make their own decisions in everything, they don't need their parents, and they are very independent. Is this taught by their parents? No. Therefore, a person's personality, disposition, and even their essence, as well as the path they choose in the future, have nothing whatsoever to do with their parents. ... Some parents believe in God and educate

their children to believe in God, but whatever they say, their children do not believe, and there is nothing the parents can do about it. Some parents don't believe in God, whereas their children believe in God. Once their children start believing in God, they follow Him, expend themselves for Him, are able to accept the truth, and gain God's approval, and their destiny thus changes. Is this the result of parental education? Not at all, it has to do with God's predestination and selection. There is a problem with the expression 'To feed without teaching is the father's fault.' Although parents have a responsibility to educate their children, a child's destiny is not determined by their parents, but by the child's nature. Can education resolve the problem of a child's nature? It cannot resolve it at all. The path a person takes in life is not determined by their parents, but is preordained by God. It is said that 'Man's fate is determined by Heaven,' and this saying is summed up by human experience. Before a person reaches adulthood, you cannot tell what path they will take. Once they become an adult, and have thoughts and can reflect on problems, they will choose what to do out in the wider community. Some people say they want to be senior officials, others say they want to be lawyers, and still others say they want to be writers. Everyone has their own choices and their own ideas. No one says, 'I'll just wait for my parents to educate me. I'll become whatever my parents educate me to become.' No one is as foolish as this. After reaching adulthood, people's ideas begin to stir and gradually mature, and thus the path and goals ahead of them become increasingly clear. At this time, little by little it becomes obvious and apparent what type of person they are, and which group they are part of. From this point onward, each person's personality gradually becomes clearly defined, as does their disposition, as well as

the path they are pursuing, their direction in life, and the group they belong to. What is all this based upon? Ultimately, this is what God has preordained—it has nothing to do with one’s parents. Do you see this clearly now?” (The Word, Vol. 4. Exposing Antichrists. Item Nine (Part One)). God’s word clearly dissected the traditional notion of “To feed without teaching is the father’s fault.” Our children’s futures and the paths they walk are entirely decided by their natures. It has nothing to do with our parenting. Parenting can only affect a child’s daily life or some of their external behaviors, but not their natures at all. Once children mature in their thinking they choose different paths in accordance with their inborn natures, finding their way into the categories they belong to. This is predestined by God and cannot be changed by any person. But I couldn’t perceive our children’s nature essence when it came to the path they took in their faith. I even wanted to help our children in my own way, so they would stay in the faith and in the church. I vainly hoped to rely on my own methods to salvage their fates. I was stubbornly resisting God. I am just an insignificant created being and don’t even have control over my own fate, so how could I hope to control the futures of our children or change their fates? I was so arrogant and ignorant, and overrated my own abilities. Then I wondered, “Why do I think like this?” I recalled how when they were little, we all used to believe in the Lord together and when we accepted God’s work of the last days, we brought them to church and encouraged them to take on a duty. I’d thought that their being able to believe in God was directly related to our parenting. So, when I learned that they’d been cleared out, I thought that I’d not fulfilled my responsibilities as a father and that if I’d just been with them more to help and fellowship with them, maybe they wouldn’t have forsaken their faith and pursued the world. From God’s word I now see how utterly absurd my views were and how they didn’t align with the truth at all.

They'd believed in God for over a decade, read His word, listened to sermons and knew that a true life had to be lived by pursuing the truth and doing the duty of a created being. But they had no interest in the truth and when seeing they weren't being blessed after their years of faith, they started pursuing worldly things and indulging the flesh. They betrayed God and followed worldly trends despite knowing the true way, and even with others often fellowshiping with them and helping them, they were stubborn and unrepentant. This shows that they are averse to the truth in nature and that they uphold evil. They are not among those to be saved by God but belong to the world and the devil. When they are destroyed in the coming disasters, it will be because they betrayed God, and it will be their fault alone. I also thought about how many people in the church who were not converted by their parents, but rather through chance, by colleagues, friends, or even strangers who shared the gospel with them, and their parents' persecution couldn't keep them from believing or doing a duty. Some parents rely on affections to keep preaching to their children, but the children don't believe and even resent and resist their parents. Some parents are expelled because of their unrepentant pursuit of status and numerous evils, yet their children remain unaffected and can even see into their parents' essences in line with God's word and reject them. Likewise, many children are cleared out and expelled and their parents are able to discern their essences in light of God's word. From this we can see that whether a person walks the right path or the wrong one, whether they are good or evil people, whether they love or hate the truth, and even what their final outcome is, is entirely determined by their nature essence and not a result of parenting. The responsibility parents can fulfill is raising their children to adulthood and bringing them before God. But the path they take and their fate is wholly out of the parents' control. Our children have chosen by

themselves to take the wrong path and even fulfilling my responsibilities as a father wouldn't bring them back. This has nothing to do with whether I have fulfilled these responsibilities. Their natures are averse to the truth. Even if I stayed with them and spent all my days fellowshipping with them, it'd be for nothing. When I regarded our children in line with God's word, I felt much more liberated and was no longer disturbed in my duty.

Huijuan, this is what I have gained from the situation these days. I know that your affections for our children are strong and that this all must have been very hard for you. I don't know how you've gotten through this. Though our children being cleared out may not have aligned with our notions, there must be lessons for us to learn from the situation God has arranged. I hope that you will be able to seek the truth in this and approach the matter correctly. You can write to me if you have gained anything from this situation, too. I look forward to your response.

Yours,

Zhou Ming

August 20, 2022

62. Reflections After Blindly Worshiping People

By Jiang Ling, China

In 2019 when I was a leader in a church, I met two upper-level leaders. Whenever they fellowshiped about the truth to resolve problems, they grasped the key issue. Their fellowshiping and dissection started on the surface, and then went deeper, proceeding methodically, layer-by-layer, and I felt that I benefited a lot from listening to them, and that they had great insight into problems and possessed the truth reality. Considering that my life experiences were shallow, I thought that having people like that lead me would definitely allow me to make faster progress and understand more of the truth, ensuring that I would attain salvation. Thereafter, whatever problems or difficulties I encountered in my work, I would immediately write to them to seek advice. When I saw that the detailed and methodical guidance in their response letters could resolve my problems and difficulties, I looked up to and relied on them even more. Gradually, I sought them out to help resolve issues large and small, and even some work of general affairs. Whatever state or difficulty I had, I didn't focus on eating and drinking God's word to seek the truth, nor did I want to fellowship with the sisters I worked with. Instead, I waited for a gathering with those two leaders to resolve everything. Every time I heard them fellowship at a gathering, I listened intently and diligently took notes, afraid that if I was careless I might miss something. At regular gatherings, those two leaders often pointed out and dissected our individual problems, and if someone who was pruned responded by arguing and justifying themselves, those two leaders would expose them on the spot. Sometimes when I revealed corruption that I wasn't even aware of, they were able to point out my hidden motives, and fellowship and dissect the nature of my behavior. That

made me feel even more strongly that those two leaders understood the truth and possessed reality, so I looked up to and venerated them more and more. But after seeing them in action for some time, I discovered that when they fellowshiped and resolved problems at gatherings, they just pointed out the corrupt dispositions we revealed, but seldom fellowshiped by relating to their own revelations of corruptions and real experiences. Most of the time they just talked about their positive entry, making it seem like they were not corrupt and possessed a great ability to practice the truth. I had a vague feeling that they only focused on work, and didn't really have any life entry. But then I thought, "They can see through others' problems and guide our work. Isn't that also having life entry and possessing reality?" So I still thought highly of them, idolized them, and even emulated their way of working. Whenever I saw that the brothers and sisters had problems in doing their duty or revealed their corrupt dispositions, I would imitate those two leaders and relentlessly expose them. As a result, some of the brothers and sisters became mired in negativity. They were afraid of me, and felt constrained by me. Because I worshiped those two leaders too much, whenever I faced problems I didn't rely on God to seek the truth. Instead, I always sought them out for resolutions. Gradually, I felt that my thinking was getting increasingly muddled. Whether they were the brothers' and sisters' states or work problems, they all seemed hazy to me, and I couldn't see them clearly, and problems that I could previously resolve now left me baffled. But I still didn't reflect on myself.

One day in April I heard that those two upper-level leaders had been revealed as false leaders, people who didn't pursue the truth, and they both resigned. I simply didn't dare believe it was true. For a few days, I kept wondering, "How could they resign? They are capable and understand so many truth principles, but were both revealed as people who didn't pursue

the truth. I'm not nearly at their level, and if I keep on practicing my faith this way, can I do my duty well and attain salvation?" At the time, I was in agony. I even thought about resigning. I was aware that my state wasn't right, and couldn't help but ask myself, "Do I believe in God, or my leaders? Why would I react so strongly to those two upper-level leaders resigning, and even feel that it's hopeless for me to attain salvation in my belief in God?" I realized that I believed in God, yet worshiped people, and that there was no place for God in my heart. This was a dangerous state to be in, and I was afraid. So I quickly prayed to God and asked Him to guide me to know my own corruption.

The next day I read from the word of God: **"It would be best for those people who claim to follow God to open their eyes and take a good look to see exactly who they believe in: Is it really God that you believe in, or Satan? If you know that what you believe in is not God, but your own idols, then it would be best if you did not claim to be a believer. If you really do not know who you believe in, then, again, it would be best if you did not claim to be a believer. To say so would be blasphemy! No one is forcing you to believe in God. Do not say you believe in Me; I have had enough of such talk, and do not wish to hear it again, because what you believe in are the idols in your hearts and the local bullies among you"** (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. A Warning to Those Who Do Not Practice the Truth). Reading God's word was very moving, especially the part that says: **"It would be best for those people who claim to follow God to open their eyes and take a good look to see exactly who they believe in."** That was really poignant for me, and I felt as if it was me that God was exposing. Thinking back on my experiences with the two upper-level leaders, I had seen them resolve problems clearly and logically and speak in an organized, methodical way. I thus felt that they

possessed the truth reality, and if I gathered and fellowshiped with them more often, I would make fast progress in life, ensuring that I would attain salvation. So instead of relying on God to seek the truth to resolve whatever problems or difficulties I faced, I would always ask those two leaders, rely on them, and do whatever they said. In my heart, they had become my idols, and I relied on them. Now that they had resigned, I felt that I had no path or direction in doing my duty. Only then did I realize that all along it was not God, but people that I relied on and looked to. On the outside, I believed in God and did my duty, and every day my mouth prayed to God, but there was no place for God in my heart. Whenever I ran into problems, I always sought out people, and listened to them. I clearly believed in people! Then I remembered these words of God: **“People who believe in God should submit to God and worship Him. Do not exalt or look up to any person; do not put God first, the people you look up to second, and yourself third. No person should hold a place in your heart, and you should not consider people—particularly those you venerate—to be on a par with God or to be His equal. This is intolerable to God”** (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. The Ten Administrative Decrees That Must Be Obeyed by God’s Chosen People in the Age of Kingdom). I felt that God’s righteous disposition tolerates no offense. God is the Creator, and those who believe in God should worship Him and honor Him as great, and must not worship and look up to people. I believed in God, but idolized people, which He detests. If I continued that way, I would offend God’s disposition!

During that time I was always praying to God, and reflecting on why I worshiped those two leaders so much. Reading God’s words, I came to understand this problem better. Almighty God says: **“What you admire is not the humility of Christ, but those false shepherds of prominent standing. You do not adore the loveliness or wisdom of Christ, but**

those libertines who wallow in the filth of the world. You laugh at the pain of Christ who has no place to lay His head, but you admire those corpses that hunt for offerings and live in debauchery. You are not willing to suffer alongside Christ, but you gladly throw yourself into the arms of those reckless antichrists, though they only supply you with flesh, words, and control. Even now, your heart still turns toward them, toward their reputation, toward their status, toward their influence. And yet you continue to hold an attitude of finding the work of Christ hard to swallow and being unwilling to accept it. This is why I say that you lack the faith to acknowledge Christ. The reason you have followed Him to this day is only because you had no other option. A series of lofty images are forever towering in your heart; you cannot forget their every word and deed, nor their influential words and hands. They are, in your heart, forever supreme and forever heroes. But this is not so for the Christ of today. He is forever insignificant in your heart, and forever undeserving of fear. For He is far too ordinary, has far too little influence, and is far from lofty” (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. Are You a True Believer in God?). “No matter the level of a leader or worker, if you worship them for understanding a bit of the truth and for having a few gifts, and believe that they possess the truth reality and can help you, and if you look up to and depend on them in all things, and through this, you try to attain salvation, then this is foolish and ignorant of you. In the end, it will all come to nothing, because your starting point is inherently wrong. No matter how many truths someone understands, they cannot stand in the stead of Christ, and no matter how gifted someone is, this does not mean they possess the truth—so anyone who worships, looks up to, and follows other people will ultimately all be eliminated and condemned. Believers in God can only

look up to and follow God. Leaders and workers, whatever their rank, are still common people. If you see them as your immediate superiors, if you feel that they are superior to you, that they are more competent than you, and that they should lead you, that they are in all ways a cut above anyone else, then you are wrong—that is a delusion. And what consequences will this delusion visit on you? It will lead you unconsciously to measure your leaders against requirements that do not conform with reality, and to be unable to treat correctly the problems and deficiencies they have; at the same time, without your knowing it, you will also be profoundly drawn to their flair, gifts, and talents, such that before you know it, you are worshiping them, and they are your god. That path, from when they start to become your role model, the object of your worship, to when you become one of their followers, is one that will lead you unconsciously away from God. And even as you gradually move away from God, you will still believe that you are following God, that you are in His house, that you are in His presence, when actually, you will have been drawn away by minions of Satan, by antichrists. You will not even sense it. This is a very dangerous state of affairs. To solve this problem requires, in part, the ability to discern the nature essence of the antichrists, and the ability to see through to the ugly face of the antichrists' hatred of the truth and resistance to God; so, too, does it require being familiar with the antichrists' commonly used techniques of misleading and ensnaring people, as well as the way they do things. The other piece is that you must pursue knowledge of God's disposition and essence. It must be clear to you that only Christ is the truth, the way, and the life, that worshiping any person shall visit catastrophe and misfortune on you. You must trust that only Christ can save people, and you must follow

and submit to Christ with absolute faith. This alone is the correct path of human life. Some might say: ‘Well, I do have my reasons for worshiping leaders—in my heart, I naturally worship anyone who is talented. I worship any leader who is in line with my notions.’ Why do you insist on worshiping man though you believe in God? When all is said and done, who is it who will save you? Who is it who truly loves you and protects you—can you truly not see? If you believe in God and follow God, you should heed His word, and if someone speaks and acts correctly, and it accords with the truth principles, just submit to the truth—isn’t it as simple as that? Why are you so base? Why do you insist on finding someone whom you worship to follow? Why do you like to be Satan’s slave? Why not be a servant of the truth instead? In this, it is seen whether a person has reason and dignity” (The Word, Vol. 4.

Exposing Antichrists. Item Six). After reading God’s words, I felt like I was exactly the slave of Satan that God had exposed. I liked worshiping people with status and gifts who were well-spoken. I saw that when the two upper-level leaders fellowshiped about the truth to resolve problems, they could grasp the key points, and their fellowshiping was well-organized, clear, and methodical. I was attracted to their gifts and their working ability, and felt that they understood the truth and possessed the truth reality, so I blindly idolized and relied on them. I felt that with them leading me I could understand the truth, do my job well, make fast progress in life, and have hope to attain salvation. But if I strayed from their help and guidance, I had little hope of attaining salvation in my faith. I was so muddled and blind! God is the source of truth, and only He can bestow the truth on humanity, resolve all of mankind’s problems and difficulties, and save us from Satan’s influence. Regardless of how high a person’s status is, or how gifted and capable they are, they have been corrupted by Satan, and they cannot be

relied on or an object of worship. Although I believed in God, there was no place for Him in my heart. When facing problems, I never relied on God to seek the truth. Instead, I waited for people to provide a resolution. Wasn't that foolish of me? Just think—weren't those two leaders able to see through problems and talk about their knowledge because they understood that from God's word? And no matter how great their gifts and eloquence, they were corrupt human beings who possessed no truth at all. They also needed to accept God's judgment and chastisement, and needed God's salvation. Nevertheless, I looked up to and venerated them, and even wanted to rely on them to walk the path of attaining salvation through belief in God. I was so stupid. Realizing these things, I was afraid. I saw I didn't pursue the truth, and blindly worshiped people. By giving people a higher status than God in my heart, I had already shunned and betrayed Him, and was walking a path that resisted Him. Those thoughts filled me with remorse and self-recrimination, and I wanted to repent to God.

Only later did I find out the reasons why those two upper-level leaders resigned. One of them was pursuing reputation and status, using work to show off so that other people would look up to him. As a result, when his work didn't achieve results, he became negative and slacked off. The brothers and sisters fellowshiped and helped him many times, but he didn't change. In the end, he couldn't get any real work done, so he resigned. The other leader, because of facing family's hindrances to his belief, complained that believing in God was a hardship, relinquished his duty and returned to his family home to live his days. Hearing all that surprised me. When those two leaders fellowshiped at regular gatherings, they talked big, and spoke clearly and convincingly when solving other people's difficulties. But when they themselves faced the same kinds of problems, why couldn't they stand firm? Why couldn't they put the truth into practice? I previously thought

they could practice the truth, and possessed the truth reality. But now I clearly saw that they didn't actually possess the truth reality at all. When something happened that compromised their interests, they grumbled and gave up their duties. They were not people who pursued the truth, and the lofty image I had of them in my heart instantly crumbled.

Later on, I ate and drank God's words related to this problem. Almighty God says: **"Holding up God's words and being able to explain them unabashedly does not mean you are in possession of reality; things are not as simple as you imagine. Whether you are in possession of reality is not based on what you say; rather, it is based on what you live out. Only when God's words become your life and your natural expression can you be said to have reality, and only then can you be counted as having gained true understanding and actual stature. You must be able to withstand examination over long periods of time, and you must be able to live out the likeness that is required by God. This must not be mere posturing; it must flow from you naturally. Only then will you truly possess reality, and only then will you have gained life. ... No matter how ferocious the wind and waves, if you can remain standing without allowing a shred of doubt to enter your mind, and can stand firm and remain free from denial, even when there is no one else left, then you will be counted as having true understanding and genuinely in possession of reality"** (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. Only Putting the Truth Into Practice Is Possessing Reality). **"The good soldiers of the kingdom are not trained to be a group of people who can only talk about reality or boast; rather, they are trained to live out God's words at all times, to remain unyielding no matter what setbacks they face, and to live constantly in accordance with God's words and not to return to the world. This is the reality of which God speaks; this is**

God's requirement of man. Thus, do not regard the reality spoken of by God as being overly simple. Mere enlightenment from the Holy Spirit does not equal the possession of reality. Such is not the stature of man—it is the grace of God, to which man contributes nothing. Each person must endure Peter's sufferings, and, even more, possess Peter's glory, which they live out after they have gained the work of God. Only this can be called reality” (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. Only Putting the Truth Into Practice Is Possessing Reality). **“Whether the knowledge you profess accords with the truth largely depends on whether you have practical experience of it. Where there is truth in your experience, your knowledge will be practical and valuable. Through your experience, you can also gain discernment and insight, deepen your knowledge, and increase your wisdom and common sense about how you should conduct yourself. The knowledge expressed by people who do not possess the truth is doctrine, no matter how lofty it may be. This type of person may well be very intelligent when it comes to matters of the flesh but cannot make distinctions when it comes to spiritual matters. This is because such people have no experience at all of spiritual affairs. These are people who are not enlightened in spiritual affairs and do not have spiritual understanding. Whatever sort of knowledge you express, as long as it is your being, then it is your personal experience, your real knowledge. What people who speak only of doctrine—those being people who possess neither the truth nor reality—discuss can also be called their being, because they have arrived at their doctrine only through deep contemplation and it is the result of their deep rumination. Yet it is only doctrine, nothing more than imagination!”** (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. God's Work and Man's Work). After reading God's words, I suddenly realized that I worshiped those

two upper-level leaders so much because I basically didn't understand what doctrine is and what reality is. Seeing them talk big at gatherings and expose and dissect other people's corruption, I thought they had the truth reality. But now, thanks to God's words I understood that being able to cite His words, fellowship about some knowledge, and dissect some problems doesn't mean someone possesses reality. Possessing reality means that after reading God's words, people can accept those words and put them into practice. Then no matter what trials and refinements they face, they can submit to God and possess the testimony of putting the truth into practice. People who genuinely possess reality have a real understanding of their own corrupt nature and have real experience and understanding of God's words, and can use their real experience to guide and help brothers and sisters enter into the reality of God's words. Those who possess the truth reality work based on principles and do their duty loyally, and no matter what circumstances they encounter, they uphold the work of the church and fulfill their duties. Thinking back on the clear and logical fellowshipping of those two upper-level leaders in gatherings, it seemed like they were quite good at resolving other people's problems. But when they faced real situations, they abandoned their duties to protect their own interests. I saw that in the past all they talked about were doctrines, but not reality, and when they were put in real situations, they fell. That proved that they didn't possess the truth reality at all. Thinking back, whenever they resolved others' problems during regular gatherings, they compared other people to God's words to get them to understand themselves. I rarely heard them talk about their own corruptions and shortcomings, or dissect their own wrong intentions. They rarely talked about their experiential knowledge of how they sought the truth and practiced the truth. Most of the time they dissected and condemned others from a high position. It was as if they themselves

weren't part of corrupt mankind, and they didn't have corrupt dispositions. When reprimanded by those two leaders, some brothers and sisters were brought to tears, living in negativity and weakness, and were afraid to see them. It was only then that I clearly saw that those two leaders simply could not use the truth to resolve problems. They just spoke empty words and doctrines. Working based on their own thinking and work experience, they couldn't resolve our life entry issues at all. Before that, I had no discernment, and blindly looked up to and worshiped them, and even imitated their way of working. I was so blind!

After that, in doing my duty I focused on relying on God and looking to Him. For a while, there were some jobs I didn't know how to handle, and when I encountered some difficulties and problems, I didn't know how to resolve them. So I often prayed to God, and sought the truth principles and sought fellowship with my brothers and sisters. That way, some problems were resolved, and I grasped some truth principles, and made some headway in my work. Gradually, I gained more faith in doing my duty and made some progress, and felt fulfilled in my heart. I realized that to do my duty well and gain the truth, I can never stray from God and the guidance of God's words.

63. I Finally Heard God's Voice

By David, Venezuela

I used to be the payroll supervisor for a state government in Venezuela. I had to handle payroll issues and lots of people's demands every day. Work was my daily focus, and though I was pretty busy, my life was always very peaceful. When the pandemic hit unexpectedly, people couldn't interact with others and their income couldn't even cover half the cost of their food. My life slid into crisis, too. I needed to stand in line to buy food, and there was a 3-day line to buy gas. At that time, I looked to the Lord's words to find comfort.

My neighbor was also a believer, and whenever we ran into each other we'd talk about something regarding our faith. We both believed that all these disasters had been prophesied in the Bible, and that mankind's evil and corruption were the source of all these catastrophes. We were in the last days, and the Bible prophesied that the Lord Jesus would return to judge us at this time, so we had to welcome the Lord to gain God's protection and salvation. Every day, I prayed to God for wisdom and to guide me. I wanted to know God, and I needed to find Him, because God's word was the only way I could find comfort. So I opened up a Bible and asked God to enlighten me. I read the Book of Psalms and the Book of Proverbs as well as the Lord Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, but I still didn't find the path I should take. I felt really lost and my financial troubles were becoming worse and worse. My life was descending into crisis and I couldn't provide for my family. When my daughter had needs, I wasn't able to help her. I was really sad, and all I could do was comfort her by saying that these hardships were temporary, but even I didn't believe that. Sadness took hold of my heart. I didn't know what to do. I wanted to emigrate, to leave this

country and look for some other solution, but I couldn't get my passport and all the necessary documents because of the pandemic. My life was becoming a mess. Just then, my wife said that she didn't want to stay with me anymore. That was the very last straw for me. I collapsed and felt that life had no meaning anymore. I became clinically depressed—I was in a lot of pain. I cried a lot and had many sleepless nights. The only way I could get a little peace was to pray to God.

Then one day, I got a message on WhatsApp. A sister invited me to join a Christian class to listen to God's word, and asked me if I wanted to study it. I said I did, and she added me to a study group. When I listened to Almighty God's words, I felt like this was God's answer to my prayers. I was drawn in by Almighty God's authoritative utterances, and these words resolved lots of doubts and notions I had. I learned that God had already returned and was doing new work. This had a huge impact on me. Amidst my surprise, joy, and curiosity, I learned about God's 6,000-year management plan and His three stages of work to save mankind, that He takes on a different name in each age (Jehovah, Jesus, and Almighty God), and the meaning of the work He does in each age. Almighty God's words appealed to me—I was so happy. I wanted to understand more truths and share them with others, so I happily shared the gospel with my neighbors, telling them the Lord Jesus has returned. I thought that any believer hearing God's gospel of the last days would rejoice, seek the truth, and happily accept the gospel. But it was the exact opposite. They asked me, "None of this is in the Bible, where did you get this from?" I told them, "I learned about it from an online study group, and I've just started studying it, so my knowledge is limited, but Almighty God's words have really drawn me in." They told me to be careful, and that lots of false christs will arise in the last days. Then they sent me a couple of Bible verses: **"And then if any man**

shall say to you, See, here is christ; or, see, he is there; believe him not: For false christs and false prophets shall rise, and shall show signs and wonders, to mislead, if it were possible, even the elect. But take you heed: behold, I have foretold you all things” (Mark 13:21–23). They said I was looking into a false religion, and that in this technologically advanced world of the 21st century, if the Lord Jesus returned, He’d surely display a great miracle that would rock the entire globe, but nothing like that had happened yet. Also, we hadn’t seen things like the Lord Jesus healing the sick, raising the dead, or other such things happening, so that meant the Lord hadn’t returned yet. When I heard them say that, my heart was filled with doubts. I was afraid of betraying the Lord Jesus. I was worried about being deceived and following a false christ. From the beginning, I always believed that the Lord Jesus would return on the clouds and sit on a great white throne judging each person according to what they had done, but the gospel sharers said God had become flesh and was uttering words to judge our sins. All these things created internal conflict for me and made me even more uneasy. Originally, I was really looking forward to our evening gathering and wanted to keep investigating this, but what my neighbors said had gone deeply into my heart, so I was feeling guarded. When the sermon started, I decided to leave the group. I wrote a message on WhatsApp explaining my reason for leaving the group, I also wrote my concerns, that I was worried about being deceived by a false christ, and I included the Bible verses my neighbors had sent me. Just as soon as I was about to send that message and leave the group, I suddenly got a notification that my cellphone had no charge and was turning off. I was surprised, because I always fully charged my phone before gatherings, so why was the battery suddenly dead? But my mind was still made up to leave the group. I told myself: How could there be no great wonders if Christ had returned? I

plugged my phone in again and decided to retype the message and send it once my phone had a minimal charge needed to power on. When the battery got to 5%, I turned on my phone and saw some Bible verses that had been sent out to the group. I read them out of curiosity: **“Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hears My voice, and opens the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me”** (Revelation 3:20). **“My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me”** (John 10:27). I saw the brothers and sisters sending messages, saying, “We can see from the word of God that when the Lord returns, He’ll knock on the door, and call out to His sheep with His words. Whether we can welcome the Lord mostly depends on whether we hear His voice. We have to be able to hear the Lord’s voice to open the door and welcome Him, and to sup with Him. So if you hear someone bear witness that the Lord has returned, don’t close the door or be afraid of being duped, but be a wise virgin—focusing on listening for the Lord’s voice is key.” Then I saw a sister had sent a passage of Almighty God’s words to the group that said: **“If, during the present day, there is to emerge a person who is able to display signs and wonders, cast out demons, heal the sick, and perform many miracles, and if this person claims that they are Jesus who has come, then this would be a counterfeit produced by evil spirits which imitate Jesus. Remember this! God does not repeat the same work. Jesus’ stage of work has already been completed, and God will never again undertake that stage of work. ... In the notions of man, God must always display signs and wonders, must always heal the sick and cast out demons, and must always be just like Jesus. Yet this time, God is not like that at all. If, during the last days, God still displayed signs and wonders, and still cast out demons and healed the sick—if He did exactly the same as Jesus—then God would be repeating the same work, and the work of**

Jesus would have no significance or value. Thus, God carries out one stage of work in every age. Once each stage of His work has been completed, it is soon imitated by evil spirits, and after Satan begins to follow on the heels of God, God changes to a different method. Once God has completed a stage of His work, it is imitated by evil spirits. You must be clear about this” (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. Knowing God’s Work Today). Almighty God’s words and the others’ fellowship amazed me. They contained the answers I’d been wanting. I told myself: This is absolutely right! God is always new, never old, and He always does new work. He wouldn’t repeat His old work. The Lord Jesus didn’t repeat the work of the Age of Law, so why would God do the same work as the Age of Grace when He returns? Almighty God has now come and begun a new age, and He is doing the new work of the Age of Kingdom. This work has never been done before. Almighty God even warned us: **“If, during the present day, there is to emerge a person who is able to display signs and wonders, cast out demons, heal the sick, and perform many miracles, and if this person claims that they are Jesus who has come, then this would be a counterfeit produced by evil spirits which imitate Jesus.”** Yes, only evil spirits imitate God’s past work, and pretend to be God by performing miracles to mislead people. This was really enlightening for me. I learned how to tell the true Christ from false ones and the real reason God doesn’t display signs and wonders in the Age of Kingdom. In the last days, God performs the work of judging, cleansing, and saving mankind by expressing truths, leading man into His kingdom. Once I understood that, I continued attending the gatherings.

Later, I read another passage of Almighty God’s words: **“No one who believes in Jesus is qualified to curse or condemn others. You should all be someone with sense and who accepts the truth. Perhaps, having**

heard the way of truth and having read the word of life, you believe that only one in 10,000 of these words are in line with your convictions and the Bible, and then you should continue to seek in that 10,000th of these words. I still advise you to be humble, to not be over-confident, and to not exalt yourself too highly. With the bit of a God-fearing heart you possess, you will gain greater light. If you carefully examine and repeatedly contemplate these words, you shall understand whether or not they are the truth, and whether or not they are life. Perhaps, having only read a few sentences, some people will blindly condemn these words, saying, ‘This is nothing more than some enlightenment of the Holy Spirit,’ or, ‘This is a false christ come to mislead people.’ Those who say such things are blinded by ignorance! You understand too little of the work and wisdom of God, and I advise you to start again from scratch! You must not blindly condemn the words expressed by God because of the appearance of false christs during the last days, and you must not be someone who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit because you are afraid of being misled. Would that not be a great pity? If, after much examination, you still believe that these words are not the truth, are not the way, and are not the expression of God, then you shall ultimately be punished, and you shall be without blessings. If you cannot accept such truth spoken so plainly and so clearly, then are you not unfit for God’s salvation? Are you not someone who is not blessed enough to return before the throne of God? Think about it! Do not be rash and impetuous, and do not treat belief in God as a game. Think for the sake of your destination, for the sake of your prospects, for the sake of your life, and do not play yourself. Can you accept these words?” (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. By the Time You Behold the Spiritual Body of Jesus, God Will Have Made Heaven and Earth Anew). I understood from

God's words that regarding God's return in the last days, we must not rashly deny the appearance of Christ. Just because false christs will appear in the last days doesn't mean we can blindly reject and condemn God's new work and the words He speaks. We have to be just like the wise virgins, learn to listen for God's voice, and investigate God's work with an attitude of humbly seeking. That's the only way to hear God's voice and welcome the Lord. Otherwise, we'll lose God's salvation. Just as Almighty God says: **"Do not be rash and impetuous, and do not treat belief in God as a game. Think for the sake of your destination, for the sake of your prospects, for the sake of your life, and do not play yourself. Can you accept these words?"** Almighty God's words showed me that when the fallacious views my neighbors shared prevented me from investigating Almighty God's work, I was rash in my acceptance. I didn't try to gain a deeper understanding of The Church of Almighty God or seek others within The Church of Almighty God to answer my questions. I just impulsively decided to leave the group and stop looking into the true way. My impulsiveness nearly cost me God's salvation in the last days. Then I knew I couldn't succumb to impulsiveness when facing confusions and doubts, or rashly pass judgment, and that I had to be cautious, pray to God and seek the truth at all times. I had to treat God's words with respect and seek humbly so I could recognize God's voice through His guidance, and welcome the Lord's return. After that, eating and drinking Almighty God's words every day gave me a deeper understanding of the Bible, and I became certain that this was the appearance and work of God in the last days, and I accepted Almighty God without hesitation.

One day, I read another two passages of Almighty God's words: **"It is not difficult to inquire into such a thing, but it requires each of us to know this one truth: He who is God incarnate shall possess the essence**

of God, and He who is God incarnate shall possess the expression of God. Since God becomes flesh, He shall bring forth the work He intends to do, and since God becomes flesh, He shall express what He is, and shall be able to bring the truth to man, bestow life upon him, and point the way for him. Flesh that does not have the essence of God is decidedly not the incarnate God; of this there is no doubt. If man intends to inquire into whether it is God's incarnate flesh, then he must corroborate this from the disposition He expresses and the words He speaks. Which is to say, to corroborate whether or not it is God's incarnate flesh, and whether or not it is the true way, one must discriminate on the basis of His essence. And so, in determining whether it is the flesh of God incarnate, the key lies in His essence (His work, His utterances, His disposition, and many other aspects), rather than external appearance. If man scrutinizes only His external appearance, and as a result overlooks His essence, this shows that man is benighted and ignorant" (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. Preface). "God become flesh is called Christ, and so the Christ that can give people the truth is called God. There is nothing excessive about this, for He possesses the essence of God, and possesses God's disposition, and wisdom in His work, that are unattainable by man. Those who call themselves christ, yet cannot do the work of God, are frauds. Christ is not merely the manifestation of God on earth, but also the particular flesh assumed by God as He carries out and completes His work among man. This flesh cannot be supplanted by just any man, but is a flesh that can adequately bear God's work on earth, and express the disposition of God, and well represent God, and provide man with life. Sooner or later, those who impersonate Christ will all fall, for although they claim to be christ, they possess none of the

essence of Christ. And so I say that the authenticity of Christ cannot be defined by man, but is answered and decided by God Himself. In this way, if you truly wish to seek the way of life, you must first acknowledge it is by coming to earth that God performs the work of bestowing the way of life unto man, and you must acknowledge it is during the last days that He comes to earth to bestow the way of life unto man. This is not the past; it is happening today” (The Word, Vol. 1. The

Appearance and Work of God. Only Christ of the Last Days Can Give Man the Way of Eternal Life).

I learned from God’s words that we can’t judge by appearances to tell the true Christ apart from false ones, and that we have to look at their essence, that is, by seeing if they can do God’s work and express God’s words and disposition. God has come to earth as incarnate flesh, He is expressing truths, and is doing His work. All that He reveals is what God has and is—it is entirely God’s disposition, and the work He does can save people. These are all things that no human possesses or can achieve. Therefore, the most accurate way to determine if someone is Christ is by looking at whether they can do God’s work and express God’s words and disposition. During that time of investigating Almighty God’s work and reading His word, on top of seeing His love for man revealed through Almighty God’s words, I also saw God’s righteousness, wrath, and majesty. His words are like a sharp sword, cutting open the corruption inside our hearts, exposing our God-resisting satanic nature. We can directly see our inner corruption, as well as the path we must take in our faith. By putting His words into practice, we can gradually resolve our corrupt dispositions and live out normal humanity. Almighty God’s words disclose so many mysteries of the truth and allow us to learn about His 6,000-year management plan to save mankind. These things can’t be found in the Bible or in any religion. These are all mysteries of the truth God is unveiling for mankind in the last days,

and are all things that people haven't heard or seen before. No famous or great figure can express the truth and save humanity. Only God incarnate can express the truth and do the work of judging and cleansing man, and bring us the way, the truth, and the life. I confirmed from Almighty God's words that He is Christ of the last days, the God who created the heavens, the earth, and all things, the God who issued the law to guide man's life on earth, the God who was crucified to redeem all of humanity, and even more, the God who has returned in the last days to save us from our sins. Without a doubt, God is the Beginning and the End, and Almighty God is the return of the Lord Jesus. Those false christs are imposters who will fall sooner or later because they can't express the truth, they aren't capable of doing God's new work, and they can't help people cast off corruption and be saved. All they can do is imitate God's past work to mislead and corrupt people. Now, Christ of the last days, Almighty God, is expressing the truth and doing the work of judgment beginning with the house of God. He is cleansing and transforming people's corruption, and saving mankind from sin. Almighty God's work and words fully prove that He is the appearance of the true God. That is beyond doubt.

Before, I was clinging to my notions. I thought God would judge man's sins from a great white throne in the sky in the last days, but then through gathering and reading God's words, this notion of mine was corrected. That's because I learned how God purifies people through His judgment work in the last days. I saw that the Lord Jesus said: **"I have yet many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. However, when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth: for He shall not speak of Himself; but whatever He shall hear, that shall He speak: and He will show you things to come"** (John 16:12-13). **"Sanctify them through Your truth: Your word is truth"** (John 17:17). **"And if any**

man hears My words, and believes not, I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world. He that rejects Me, and accepts not My words, has one that judges him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day” (John 12:47–48). I read another two passages of Almighty God’s words: “Before man was redeemed, many of Satan’s poisons had already been planted within him and, after thousands of years of being corrupted by Satan, he has within him an established nature that resists God. Therefore, when man has been redeemed, it is nothing more than a case of redemption in which man is bought at a high price, but the poisonous nature within him has not been eliminated. Man that is so defiled must undergo a change before becoming worthy to serve God. By means of this work of judgment and chastisement, man will fully come to know the filthy and corrupt essence within his own self, and he will be able to change completely and become clean. Only in this way can man become worthy to return before the throne of God. All the work done this day is so that man can be made clean and be changed; through judgment and chastisement by the word, as well as through refinement, man can purge away his corruption and be made pure. Rather than deeming this stage of work to be that of salvation, it would be more apt to say it is the work of purification” (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. The Mystery of the Incarnation (4)). “Christ of the last days uses a variety of truths to teach man, to expose the substance of man, and to dissect the words and deeds of man. These words comprise various truths, such as man’s duty, how man should submit to God, how man should be loyal to God, how man ought to live out normal humanity, as well as the wisdom and the disposition of God, and so on. These words are all directed at the substance of man and his corrupt disposition. In particular, the words

that expose how man spurns God are spoken in regard to how man is an embodiment of Satan, and an enemy force against God. In undertaking His work of judgment, God does not simply make clear the nature of man with a few words; He exposes and prunes over the long term. All these different methods of exposure and pruning cannot be substituted with ordinary words, but with the truth of which man is utterly bereft. Only methods such as these can be called judgment; only through judgment of this kind can man be subdued and thoroughly convinced about God, and moreover gain true knowledge of God. What the work of judgment brings about is man's understanding of the true face of God and the truth about his own rebelliousness. The work of judgment allows man to gain much understanding of the intentions of God, of the purpose of God's work, and of the mysteries that are incomprehensible to him. It also allows man to recognize and know his corrupt essence and the roots of his corruption, as well as to discover the ugliness of man. These effects are all brought about by the work of judgment, for the essence of this work is actually the work of opening up the truth, the way, and the life of God to all those who have faith in Him. This work is the work of judgment done by God" (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. Christ Does the Work of Judgment With the Truth). I learned that God is doing the judgment work of the last days by incarnating Himself and expressing truths to judge and cleanse mankind. Almighty God has spoken, revealing man's satanic nature and corrupt dispositions that include things like arrogance, deceitfulness, and being averse to the truth. He has also revealed man's selfishness and greed. All of this allows people to see the truth of their corruption through the judgment of His words, thereby hating themselves, repenting to God, and achieving fear of and submission to God. The only way to resolve man's satanic dispositions is through Almighty

God's judgment work in the last days. No human can do that. I realized that if God judged each person from a great white throne in the sky, no one among all of humanity, corrupted by Satan, would have a chance at salvation. That's because all mankind is deeply corrupted by Satan. Although through the Lord Jesus' salvation of the cross, we've been redeemed and our sins are forgiven, we are still sinners. We go through the cycle of sinning and confessing over and over. If we don't experience judgment, our corruption can't be cleansed, and ultimately, we'll be condemned and eliminated by God! Only by being directly judged and exposed by God's words can we truly know ourselves and genuinely repent and change, and can our corruption be cleansed. Just as Almighty God says: **"All the work done this day is so that man can be made clean and be changed; through judgment and chastisement by the word, as well as through refinement, man can purge away his corruption and be made pure"** (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. The Mystery of the Incarnation (4)).

I read a passage of Almighty God's words in a gathering once that really stirred up feelings in me. Almighty God says: **"Those who do not understand the truth always follow others: If people say that this is the work of the Holy Spirit, then you, too, say it is the work of the Holy Spirit; if people say it is the work of an evil spirit, then you, too, become doubtful, or also say it is the work of an evil spirit. You always parrot the words of others, and are incapable of distinguishing anything by yourself, nor are you able to think for yourself. This is someone without a position, who is unable to differentiate—such a person is a worthless wretch! You always repeat the words of others: Today it is said that this is the work of the Holy Spirit, but there is a probability that one day someone will say it is not the work of the Holy Spirit, and that it is in fact nothing but the deeds of man—yet you**

cannot discern this, and when you witness it being said by others, you say the same thing. It is actually the work of the Holy Spirit, but you say it is the work of man; have you not become one of those who blaspheme against the work of the Holy Spirit? In this, have you not opposed God because you cannot differentiate?" (The Word, Vol. 1. The

Appearance and Work of God. Only Those Who Know God and His Work Can Satisfy God).

God's words warned us against blindly listening to others' guidance when investigating the true way, and evaluating God's work based on human notions and imaginings. By doing so, we are likely to resist God and offend His disposition, losing our chance at salvation. This sad reality is something that could happen to any one of us. I felt ashamed of how foolish and impulsive I'd been. How was it that even after hearing the voice of God and feeling that these words contained authority and power, I was still influenced by my neighbors, and misled by what they said? My foolishness and impulsiveness almost made me leave The Church of Almighty God, miss the Lord Jesus' return, and ruin my chance at salvation. My blindness and ignorance could have had such terrible consequences for me! I understood that I should be a wise virgin. When we hear God's voice, we must accept it unwaveringly, because we're all created beings and we have to follow God's words at all times, just like Peter heard the Lord Jesus' words and then followed the Lord. Thinking back on my former foolishness and ignorance, I prayed to Almighty God, asking Him to forgive me. I was ready to accept Almighty God, and God's judgment and salvation.

Since then, I've been reading Almighty God's words every day. When I'm weak, I ask God for faith and strength, so I don't stumble and fall. With God's guidance and help, my state has now become much better. I also have a new job. I feel this is all thanks to God's wondrous arrangements. Gradually, my life has improved quite a bit. Most importantly, I can eat and

drink Almighty God's words every day and gather and fellowship with others. Now I've started sharing the gospel and bearing witness to God's words, helping more true believers who thirst for the true way hear God's voice and accept His salvation of the last days.

64. A False Leader's Awakening

By Yang Fan, China

In 2019, I was elected as a church leader, and I swore to myself that I would do my duty well. After starting my new position, I was busy every day with gatherings, resolving my brothers and sisters' difficulties and problems in their duties, and following up on our work's progress. All of this made me feel very fulfilled. After a while, because I had to handle some general affairs work, my workload greatly increased. I worked late every day, and felt like I could barely keep up. I thought to myself, "Being in charge of the overall work is having me worry about many things, and it's much more tiring. Every day my mind feels like a clock spring getting wound up. It's not as easy as having just single-faceted duty." Later, I went to a group gathering that Sister Zhao Jing was supervising. I thought, "In the past, when I was partnered with Zhao Jing, she was so responsible in her duties, and actively sought the truth to resolve any difficulties she faced. She supervises the work in this group, so I don't need to worry too much." After that, I rarely went to gatherings with their group. One evening, some brothers and sisters wrote to point out that the work of Zhao Jing's group had some deviations and problems and they asked me to quickly resolve the problems. I intended to search for God's word in advance and seek a solution, but seeing these problems couldn't be solved in a short time, I thought, "It's so late, and I'm so tired. I can't do this right now. Besides, I've already written a letter to Zhao Jing about these deviations and problems. She is a responsible person, so I'm sure she'll take the initiative to fellowship and resolve them, and I won't have to bother with it myself. If I did everything myself, how would I ever get anything done, anyway? I'll just fellowship with the group about it at the gathering." Later, once I

looked into it, I saw that Zhao Jing had already fellowshiped with the group, and everyone was able to suggest paths of practice regarding these problems, which made me even more confident that I had nothing to worry about with Zhao Jing in charge. After that, I didn't ask about the group's work anymore.

After some time, I went to another gathering with Zhao Jing's group. I found that she was too indirect in her fellowship on her state, talking for a long time without ever speaking clearly. I thought to myself, "Is she in a bad state? Why is she being so incoherent?" But then I thought, "She might just be nervous because I'm here. She'll be fine once she sorts herself out a bit. I have some other things to do, so maybe I should just leave and let her get on with the gathering." And so I left without fellowshiping with her. Later, I found out that the group's work was ineffective. I thought, "Is there some problem in the group?" But then I reconsidered, "They just fellowshiped about problems and deviations in their duty. I'm sure everyone is just getting back into the swing of things, so it's normal for their work to be less fruitful right now." With this in mind, I didn't think any more about it. Later, Sister Wang Xinrui reported to me that Zhao Jing was obsessed with status, couldn't cooperate harmoniously with others, and that she wasn't suited to be a group leader. I thought, "Zhao Jing is a bit too focused on status, but she has a sense of burden toward her duty. If she can't cooperate harmoniously with others, it must be because she's in a bad state right now and controlled by her corrupt dispositions. She just needs some time to sort herself out." Thinking this, I said to Xinrui, "Zhao Jing is responsible in her duty, and she's still up to the task of being a group leader. If she reveals corruption, we can try to help her more and expose and dissect her issues. I'm busy today, so I don't have time, but I will fellowship with her later." When Xinrui heard me say that, she didn't say anything

else. Later, as I became busy with other tasks, I forgot about fellowshiping with Zhao Jing. One night, I suddenly remembered, “Oh no, I forgot about Zhao Jing’s state. Should I go check on her state?” But then I thought, “She has good caliber, and when her state was bad in the past, she could seek the truth and quickly resolve it herself. She should be able to sort herself out this time, too. Plus, she lives so far away. If I go all the way out there, which is tiring, and she’s not at home, wouldn’t I have made the trip for nothing? Forget it, I’ll see to it at the end of the month.” At the end of the month when I went to inspect their work, I was completely dumbstruck. There were so many problems and deviations in Zhao Jing’s work, and her work results had fallen to their lowest. The brothers and sisters she supervised were all in negative states, and their work had been heavily impacted. Only then did I realize just how serious things were. I quickly went to Zhao Jing to fellowship and point out her problems, but she refused to accept it, arguing back, trying to justify herself, and showing no knowledge of herself. After talking about her with my partner, we decided Zhao Jing was no longer suited to be a group leader, and finally dismissed her. After that, the brothers and sisters also reported that Zhao Jing was really jealous, neglected her duties, and engaged in disputes. This had caused one sister to feel constrained by her, become repressed, and want to leave her duty. Wang Xinrui had reported on Zhao Jing’s situation, but she was suppressed and excluded by Zhao Jing. The other sisters also felt constrained by Zhao Jing, and their duties were affected, causing work to be hindered for several months. After Zhao Jing was dismissed, not only did she not repent, she actually retaliated against others. Being exposed didn’t cause her to understand or regret her evil deeds at all. Later, because I failed to do real work, neglected my duty, and didn’t dismiss Zhao Jing in time, causing serious losses to church work, I was also dismissed. This made me

absolutely miserable. Only then did I start to ask myself why I had been too blind to recognize Zhao Jing's chronic jealousy and strife, as well as her serious disruption and disturbance of the church's work. At the time, I only had a shallow knowledge that I wasn't doing real work and wasn't focusing on discerning others, but I never seriously focused on understanding or dissecting my own corrupt dispositions.

In a gathering, I gained some understanding of myself only after reading God's words exposing the behaviors of false leaders not doing real work. God's words say: **"False leaders never ask about or follow up on the work situations of various team supervisors. They also don't ask about, follow up on, or have a grasp on the life entry of supervisors of different teams and personnel responsible for various important jobs, as well as their attitudes toward church work and their duties, and toward faith in God, the truth, and God Himself. They don't know whether these individuals have undergone any transformation or growth, nor do they know about the various issues that may exist in their work; in particular, they do not know about the impact of errors and deviations occurring in various stages of the work on the work of the church and the life entry of God's chosen people, along with whether these errors and deviations have ever been corrected. They are entirely ignorant about all of these things. If they know nothing about these detailed conditions, they become passive whenever problems arise. However, false leaders don't bother with these detailed issues at all while doing their job. They believe that after arranging various team supervisors and assigning tasks, their work is done—it counts as having done the job well, and if other problems arise it's none of their concern. Because false leaders fail to supervise, guide, and follow up on various team supervisors, and they do not fulfill their responsibilities in**

these areas, this results in a mess being made of the church's work. This is the leaders and workers being derelict in their duties" (The Word, Vol. 5. The Responsibilities of Leaders and Workers. The Responsibilities of Leaders and Workers (3)). **"Do you think false leaders are stupid? They are stupid and foolish. What makes them stupid? They blithely put their trust in a person, believing that because when this person was chosen, they swore an oath, and made a resolution, and prayed with tears streaming down their face, that means they are dependable, and there will never be any issues with them taking charge of work in the future. False leaders have no understanding of people's natures; they are ignorant of the true situation of corrupt mankind. They say, 'How could someone change for the worse when they have been chosen as a supervisor? How could someone who seems so intense and reliable shirk their work? They wouldn't, would they? They have a lot of integrity.' Because false leaders have put too much faith in their own imaginings and feelings, this ultimately renders them incapable of timely resolving the many problems that arise in church work, and stops them from promptly dismissing and reassigning the supervisor involved. They are bona fide false leaders. And just what is the issue here? Does false leaders' approach to their work have anything to do with perfunctoriness? In one respect, they see the great red dragon rabidly carrying out arrests of God's chosen people, so to keep themselves safe, they randomly arrange for someone to be in charge of work, believing that this will solve the problem, and that they don't need to pay it any more attention. What do they think in their hearts? 'This is such a hostile environment, I should hide for a while.' This is coveting fleshly comforts, is it not? In another respect, false leaders have a fatal flaw: They are quick to trust people based on their own imaginings. And this**

is caused by not understanding the truth, is it not? How does God's word reveal the essence of corrupt humankind? Why should they trust in people when God doesn't? False leaders are too arrogant and self-righteous, are they not? What they think is, 'I couldn't have misjudged this person, there shouldn't be any problems with this person that I've judged to be suitable; they are definitely not someone who indulges in eating, drinking and entertainment, or who likes comfort and hates hard work. They are absolutely dependable and trustworthy. They will not change; if they did, that would mean I was wrong about them, wouldn't it?' What kind of logic is this? Are they some kind of expert? Do they have x-ray vision? Do they have that special skill? You could live with a person for one or two years, but would you be able to see who they really are without a suitable environment to lay their nature essence utterly bare? If they were not revealed by God, you could live side-by-side with them for three, or even five, years, and would still struggle to see just what kind of nature essence they have. And how much more is that true when you rarely see them, are rarely with them? False leaders blithely trust a person based on a fleeting impression or someone else's positive appraisal of them, and dare to entrust the work of the church to such a person. In this, are they not being extremely blind? Are they not acting recklessly? And when they work like this, are the false leaders not being extremely irresponsible?"

(The Word, Vol. 5. The Responsibilities of Leaders and Workers. The Responsibilities of Leaders and Workers (3)).

God exposes that false leaders are lazy, crave comfort, and are completely irresponsible in their duties. Once they put someone in charge, false leaders readily trust them based on their imaginings and notions. They don't follow up on or supervise work, not wanting to pay the price to check

up on it. They cut corners wherever they can, resulting in serious losses to church work. Seeing God expose the various behaviors of false leaders not doing real work, I felt as if God was exposing me to my face. It was very uncomfortable, and I felt guilty. As a leader, I had been very irresponsible toward my duty. To save myself from worry and fleshly suffering, I was slippery and didn't follow up on work. I only relied on my initial impression of Zhao Jing, thinking she was responsible in her duty and suitable for a group leader, so I started to take a hands-off approach and didn't supervise her work. When I saw her work wasn't getting good results and that I would have to suffer and pay a price to solve the issue, I didn't do real work and instead made excuses to accommodate myself, saying everyone was still adapting and they'd get on the right track soon. When others reported that Zhao Jing had problems and was an unsuitable group leader, I still assumed it was just a temporary revelation of corruption based on my notions and imaginings, and that it wouldn't impact her duty. I put off resolving Zhao Jing's problems again and again, until finally the group's work became paralyzed and the life entry of my brothers and sisters suffered severe losses. I was so stubborn, foolish, and irresponsible. I was a false leader who craved comfort and didn't do real work! The fact is that the leaders and workers the church elected, including me, have not been perfected; we have many corrupt dispositions, and we can cause disruptions and disturbances in our duties at any time. Even if we appear to behave well, it doesn't mean we are qualified to be used. We don't understand the truth, and we only look at people's appearances without seeing through to their essences, so we need to frequently follow up on and supervise work to be responsible toward the work. I didn't understand the truth and couldn't see through to people, but I had blind self-confidence, so I caused great losses to church work as a result, and left transgressions and defilement in

my wake. Once I realized this, I felt a deep regret. If I hadn't been so self-righteous, so lazy, or so greedy for comfort when Xinrui reminded me about Zhao Jing, but instead had actually investigated, discovered and resolved the issue in time, and dismissed Zhao Jing, I wouldn't have caused such delays to the church's work. I not only failed to benefit the church's work in my duty, but I acted as Satan's lackey and shielded false leaders and workers. The more I thought about it, the more distressed and miserable I felt. I thought about how when God incarnate works, He practically suffers and pays a price. In response to all of our corruption and deficiencies, God tirelessly fellowships the truth, supports and helps us, with all of His painstaking efforts to fully save us from the power of Satan. But I am a created being who didn't understand the truth, was blind and couldn't see things clearly, and I didn't want to really suffer or pay a price in my duties. I didn't want to resolve problems in good time when I found them, and I caused great losses to the work. Doing my duties like this was truly disgusting and loathsome to God! Once I realized these things, I silently prayed to God, "God, I was wrong. I wish to reflect on myself and repent to You."

I read a few more passages in which God exposes false leaders: **"The work of the church gets held up simply because false leaders are seriously derelict in their duties, do not do real work or follow up on and oversee work, and are unable to fellowship the truth to fix problems. Of course, it is also because these false leaders indulge in the benefits of status, do not pursue the truth at all, and are unwilling to follow up on, supervise, or direct the work of spreading the gospel—with the result that work progresses slowly, and many man-made deviations, absurdities, and reckless wrongdoings fail to be promptly rectified or resolved, which severely impacts the effectiveness of**

spreading the gospel. It is only when these problems are discovered by the Above and the leaders and workers are told they must fix them that these problems are corrected. Like blind people, these false leaders are unable to discover any problems, and there are no principles at all to the way they do things, and yet they are incapable of realizing their own mistakes, and only admit their errors when they are pruned by the Above. So who can afford to take responsibility for the losses caused by these false leaders? Even with removing them from their positions, how can the losses they caused be made up for? Thus when it is discovered that there are false leaders who are incapable of doing any real work, they should be promptly dismissed. In some churches, the gospel work progresses especially slowly, and this is simply down to false leaders not doing real work, as well as too many instances of dereliction and making mistakes on their part” (The Word, Vol. 5. The Responsibilities of Leaders and Workers. The Responsibilities of Leaders and Workers (4)). “In all the different items of work that false leaders do, there are actually numerous issues, deviations, and flaws that they need to resolve, correct, and remedy. However, because these false leaders lack a sense of burden, indulging only in the benefits of their status without doing any real work, they end up making a mess of the work. In some churches, people are not united in their minds, with everyone suspecting, guarding against, and undermining each other, all the while fearing being eliminated by God’s house. Faced with these situations, false leaders do not move to resolve them, failing to do any real, specific work” (The Word, Vol. 5. The Responsibilities of Leaders and Workers. The Responsibilities of Leaders and Workers (4)). “By outward appearances, false leaders are not deliberately committing myriad evils, or doing things their own way and establishing their own independent kingdoms, like antichrists do. But false leaders are not

able to promptly resolve the various problems that arise in the church's work, and when problems occur with supervisors of various teams, and when those supervisors are unable to shoulder their work, false leaders are not able to promptly alter their duties or dismiss them, bringing serious losses to the church work. And this is all caused by the false leaders' dereliction of duty" (The Word, Vol. 5. The Responsibilities of Leaders and Workers. The Responsibilities of Leaders and Workers (3)). God exposes the negligence of false leaders: how they don't actually follow up or check on work, how they don't supervise and inspect people in charge, and how, many work problems can't be solved as a result, causing serious losses to the church's work. Reflecting on my actions, I realized that because I craved comfort, I neglected my duty, was irresponsible, and trusted Zhao Jing based on my own notions and imaginings without supervising or following up on her work. When others reported her problems, I disregarded them, not resolving the real issues or dismissing her in time, which allowed her to engage in long-term jealousy and disputes, disrupt and disturb the group, and play no positive role in her duty. This caused the group's work to be ineffective for months, and seriously delayed progress. When her brothers and sisters gave her advice, she suppressed, excluded them and made them feel pressured for a long time, causing the group to feel constrained and inattentive in their duties. And yet I knew nothing about this, even always thinking that she was doing well. As a leader, not only did I fail to fulfill my responsibility, but was unable to recognize and solve the numerous problems with church work in a timely manner when they were right there in front of my face. This caused great losses to church work and the life entry of my brothers and sisters. I was seriously derelict in my duties! Although I didn't deliberately do evil like an antichrist to disrupt and disturb the church's work, my dereliction of duty still caused serious losses to the work of the

church. I hated myself for being so blind, mindless and irresponsible to the point that I transgressed in God's presence. I felt a deep sense of sadness and guilt, and felt I owed both God and my brothers and sisters.

Later, I reflected on myself. Why was I always considering my flesh, being slippery and irresponsible in my duty? Later, I saw a passage of God's word that was very helpful to me. God's words say: **"What is Satan's poison? How can it be expressed? For example, if you ask, 'How should people live? What should people live for?' people will answer, 'Every man for himself and the devil take the hindmost.' This single phrase expresses the very root of the problem. Satan's philosophy and logic have become people's lives. No matter what people pursue, they do so for themselves—and so they live only for themselves. 'Every man for himself and the devil take the hindmost'—this is the life philosophy of man, and it also represents human nature. These words have already become the nature of corrupt mankind and they are the true portrait of corrupt mankind's satanic nature. This satanic nature has already become the basis for corrupt mankind's existence. For several thousand years, corrupt mankind has lived by this venom of Satan, right up to the present day. Everything that Satan does is for the sake of its own desires, ambitions, and aims. It wishes to surpass God, to break free of God, and to seize control of all things created by God. Today, such is the extent that people have been corrupted by Satan: They all have satanic natures, they all try to deny and oppose God, and they want to control their own fates and try to oppose the orchestrations and arrangements of God. Their ambitions and desires are exactly the same as Satan's. Therefore, man's nature is Satan's nature"** (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. How to Walk the Path of Peter). I contemplated God's word and finally realized that I was

lazy, irresponsible in my duty, and lacked a conscience and reason, mainly because the satanic rule of existence “Every man for himself and the devil take the hindmost” was rooted so deeply in me that it became my nature. I always lived by it, only considering my own fleshly interests in everything, becoming increasingly selfish and despicable. When anything made me worry and suffer more or required me to pay more of a price, I used trickery and deceit to avoid it, doing whatever I could to suffer the least. When I saw taking charge of overall work required extra worry and suffering, I wanted to do a single-faceted job, instead. When my workload increased, I wanted to worry less and pay less of a price, which led me to my hands-off approach to Zhao Jing’s work. Later, when I saw her in a bad state, I was lazy and didn’t want to resolve it. Even though Xinrui reminded me that she was unfit to be used, I used being busy with work as an excuse to put off investigating and confirming Zhao Jing’s issue until it became so serious that she had to be dismissed. The church elected me as a leader and gave me a chance to practice, in the hope that I would take responsibility and shoulder my duty. But what did I do? Rather than thinking of how to do my duty well, I did nothing but craved comfort, doing whatever allowed me to worry and suffer the least. I had believed in God for years and enjoyed the watering and provision of so much of God’s word, but when anything was asked of me, I was only concerned with my comfort, not doing real work. I was selfish and despicable, and I disgusted God! I hated my lack of humanity and reason, and that I failed to live up to God’s good intention. I prayed to God, “God, I was concerned for my flesh and didn’t do real work, causing great losses to church work. I wish to repent to You. In the future, no matter what my duty is, I don’t want to consider my flesh and crave comfort anymore. I want to be responsible and do my duty well in a down-to-earth manner.”

Later, I read two more passages of God's word. Almighty God says: **"People with heart are able to be considerate of God's heart; those without heart are empty shells, fools, they do not know to be considerate of God's heart. Their mentality is: 'I don't care how urgent this is for God, I'll do it however I please—in any case, I'm not being idle or lazy.' This kind of attitude, this kind of negativity, the total lack of proactiveness—this is not someone who is considerate of God's heart, nor do they understand how to be considerate of God's heart. In which case, are they possessed of true faith? Definitely not. Noah was considerate of God's heart, he had true faith, and was thus able to complete God's commission. And so, it is not enough to simply accept God's commission and be willing to make some effort. You must also be considerate of God's intentions, give your all, and be loyal—which requires you to have a conscience and reason; it is what people ought to have, and what was found in Noah. What do you say, to build such a big ark at that time, how many years would it have taken if Noah had dragged his heels, and had no sense of urgency, no angst, no efficiency? Could it have been finished in 100 years? (No.) It would have taken several generations of constant building. On the one hand, building a solid object like an ark would take years; what's more, so would collecting and looking after all the living creatures. Was it easy to collect these creatures? (No.) It was not. And so, after hearing God's commands, and comprehending God's pressing intention, Noah sensed that this would be neither easy nor straightforward. He realized that he had to accomplish it according to God's wishes, and complete the commission given by God, so that God would be satisfied and reassured, so that the next step of God's work could proceed smoothly. Such was the heart of Noah. And what kind of heart was this? It was a**

heart that was considerate of God's intentions" (The Word, Vol. 4. Exposing Antichrists. Excursus Three: How Noah and Abraham Obeyed God's Words and Submitted to Him (Part Two)). **"No matter what important work a leader or worker does, and what the nature of this work is, their number one priority is to understand and grasp how work is going on. They must be there in person to follow up on things and ask questions, getting their information first-hand. They must not simply rely on hearsay or listen to other people's reports. Instead, they must observe with their own eyes the situation of the personnel and how work is progressing, and understand what difficulties there are, whether any areas are at odds with requirements of the Above, whether there are violations of principles, whether there exist any disturbances or disruptions, whether there is a lack of necessary equipment or related instructional materials regarding professional work—they must stay on top of all of this. No matter how many reports they listen to, or how much they glean from hearsay, neither of these beats paying a personal visit; it is more accurate and reliable for them to see things with their own eyes. Once they are familiar with all aspects of the situation, they will have a good idea of what's going on. They especially must have a clear and accurate grasp of who is of good caliber and worthy of cultivation, as only this allows them to accurately cultivate and use people, which is crucial if leaders and workers are to do their work well. Leaders and workers should have a path and principles by which to cultivate and train people of good caliber. Furthermore, they should have a grasp and understanding of the various kinds of problems and difficulties that exist in church work, and know how to solve them, and they should also have their own ideas and suggestions for how work is to progress, or its future prospects. If they are able to speak with clarity**

about such things with their eyes closed, without any doubt or misgivings, then the work will be much easier to carry out. And by working in this way, a leader will be fulfilling their responsibilities, will they not? They must be well aware of how to resolve the abovementioned issues in the work, and they must often ponder these things. When they encounter difficulties, they must fellowship and discuss these things with everyone, seeking the truth in order to resolve the issues. By doing real work with both feet planted firmly on the ground in this way, there will be no difficulties that cannot be solved”

(The Word, Vol. 5. The Responsibilities of Leaders and Workers. The Responsibilities of Leaders and Workers (4)). God’s word showed me the path to do my duty well, which is to be considerate of God’s intentions, be concerned for God’s worries, fulfill the responsibilities I should, and not let the church’s work suffer. Just like Noah, who was genuinely considerate of God’s intention. When God told him to build the ark, he didn’t consider his own gains or losses, and only thought about how to build the ark quickly according to God’s requirements. Although I can’t compare to Noah, I wanted to imitate Noah, learn to be considerate of God’s intentions, and do my utmost to meet God’s requirements. I also understood that for leaders and workers to do real work well, we must keep abreast of work, and when we see obstacles or disruptions and disturbances in the work, we must fellowship and deal with them in time to ensure work progresses normally.

After a while, my leader put me in charge of the gospel and watering work of several churches. I thought, “I can’t let this be like last time. I can’t only care about fleshly comfort and not taking responsibility for my duty. I need to stay down to earth and devote all my efforts to my duty.” After that, I focused on equipping myself with the truth of visions every day. If there were potential gospel recipients, I actively testified about God’s work of the

last days to them, and searched and equipped myself with God's word according to their religious notions. One day, as I was going to check the work of Cheng Nan church, I thought, "The leaders and the gospel deacon of this church have believed in God for a long time. They have good caliber, and are competent and responsible in their duties. They can handle their work well, so I don't need to follow up, which could save me some effort." Once I had these thoughts, I realized I was being slippery again to find reasons not to supervise or follow up on work. Now that I was in charge of these several churches, carrying out and supervising church work was my responsibility and duty. I could no longer make excuses to consider my flesh and put off my duty. With this in mind, I carefully checked the work of the church. I found that a few newcomers attended gatherings irregularly and that waterers weren't doing their jobs well. The next day, I gathered the waterers together quickly to fellowship on the truth and resolve their problems. After some time, I heard these newcomers had gotten back to regular gatherings, which made me feel at peace and secure.

Through this experience, I realized that doing duty requires actually paying a price, and even more, following up on and supervising work. This is the only way to find and resolve problems in time and do the duty well. It is the result achieved by God's word that I have had this realization and change today. Thanks be to Almighty God!

65. The Reason Why I Was So Busy

By Stanley, South Korea

I'm a watering team leader in the church. I thought that anyone who wanted to be a qualified and competent team leader had to take on everything themselves, and I expected as much from myself. As soon as I noticed that something needed doing in our team, no matter how big or small, I'd take the initiative to do it myself, including some general affairs. I even took over jobs that my brothers and sisters could do, saying generously, "I'll do that, you don't need to." Whenever this happened, I felt an inexplicable sense of pride, and that I really was a caring and responsible team leader. Over time, my brothers and sisters started coming to me whenever they had any kind of problem. My supervisor also praised me for putting in long hours performing my duty and for being able to endure hardship and pay a price. It was very gratifying to hear this, as it made me feel like a really competent team leader.

Later, more and more new believers accepted God's work in the last days, and I had a lot more newcomers to water than before. In addition to gathering with new believers every day, I also trained them, teaching them how to host gatherings, how to spread the gospel, and so on. My schedule was already very tight, but on top of that, the brothers and sisters in my team wanted my say-so even to arrange gatherings for new believers. With so much to do, I often got hung up on these trivial matters, which disrupted my schedule and left me too busy to even attend to my devotionals. Although I was really busy every day and never idle, I wasn't following up much on priority tasks. This often made me feel anxious, but I didn't know what to do about it. Once, the sister I was partnered with asked me, "You always say that you're busy, but what do you actually do every day?" Faced

with my sister's question, I just felt very aggrieved that she didn't empathize with me. Later, when the brothers and sisters encountered problems watering new believers and came to talk to me about it, I would grumble to myself, "This is a basic principle that waterers need to master. Why are you coming to me to resolve such simple problems—can't you learn to do it yourselves? Is it that you don't want to make an effort?" I didn't want to keep taking care of those matters anymore, and I felt that my brothers and sisters should handle them independently. But then I thought, "I'm the team leader. If I don't take care of these problems and let the brothers and sisters handle them instead, won't that undermine my value as a team leader? Might someone say that I haven't fulfilled my responsibilities and that I shirk my duties? If the leader finds out, might she say that I'm incompetent? Never mind—if it's something that I can do myself, I'll just do it." So most of the time I kept doing all of the team's work myself, from major tasks such as arranging gatherings, and solving the problems of new believers, to minor ones such as helping the brothers and sisters to relay messages, and finding people to take care of general affairs. I rushed to do these things, even though I didn't really want to, so that no one would doubt me as a team leader. I can't begin to describe how drained I felt sometimes, juggling so many different things at once. All I could do was console myself by thinking, "I am a team leader, after all. Team leaders must be willing to work hard." And just like that, I kept taking all matters, both big and small, into my own hands, living in a state of perpetual busyness. Although being rushed off my feet every day won me the admiration and approval of some of my brothers and sisters, there was no peace or joy in my heart. I always felt that I was making a mess of my duty, and I had no time to do a lot of critical tasks because I was overwhelmed with trivial matters.

One time, I mentioned my difficulties to the leader, and it was only after she fellowshiped with me that I gained some principles of practice. She asked me, “Aren’t you taking on a bit too much work? If you don’t let the brothers and sisters do their own work and shoulder it all by yourself instead, you’re bound to be busy. You can let them practice doing some of the less important tasks. Even if they don’t do them well, it won’t have a big impact on the church’s work. If it really is a job that no one else can do, then you must do it yourself. But if other people can do it, and you don’t let them try or give them a chance to practice, and you just take everything on yourself instead, aren’t you underestimating them, and just trying to show off? That is an outpouring of corruption.” Her fellowship hit the nail on the head regarding my state. I used to think that doing more showed that I was bearing a burden, but I never reflected on whether my actions were based on the principles, or whether they were adulterated. When I thought about it, my secret motive for taking on everything in my duty was to show off, rather than to bear a burden. In some cases, it wasn’t that other people couldn’t do a task or that they didn’t have time to, rather, it was because I thought that the more I did, the more everyone would approve of me, and say that I was a competent team leader who was responsible and bore a burden in his duty. I regarded doing my duty as a means of winning admiration from others. I kept “busy” and “bore a burden” in order to show my value as a team leader and win a place in others’ hearts. Because I had the wrong intents in my duty and always wanted to protect my status, much of the team’s work rested on my shoulders, and my brothers and sisters didn’t have any opportunity to practice. And since there was a limit to what I could do, some key tasks ended up being delayed, thereby harming the work of the church and the lives of my brothers and sisters.

Later, after reading God's words, I gained some understanding of my problems. Almighty God says: **"Some people testify about themselves using language, and speak some words that show themselves off, while other people use behaviors. What are the manifestations of a person using behaviors to testify about themselves? On the surface, they engage in some behaviors that are rather in line with people's notions, that attract people's attention, and that are seen by people as quite noble and rather in conformity with moral standards. These behaviors make people think that they are honorable, that they have integrity, that they really love God, are very pious, and really possess a God-fearing heart, and that they are a person who pursues the truth. They often display some external good behaviors in order to mislead people—does this not also reek of exalting and testifying about oneself? Usually people exalt and testify about themselves by means of words, using clear speech to express how they are different from the masses and how they have wiser opinions than others, in order to make people think highly of them and look up to them. However, there are some methods that do not involve explicit speech, where people instead use external practices to testify that they are better than others. These sorts of practices are well thought-out, they carry with them a motive and a certain intent, and they are quite purposeful. They have been wrapped and processed so that what people see are some behaviors and practices that are in line with man's notions, that are noble, pious, and conform to saintly decency, and that are even God-loving, God-fearing, and in line with the truth. This achieves the same goal of exalting and testifying about themselves and getting people to think highly of them and worship them. Have you ever encountered or seen such a thing? Do you possess these manifestations? Are these things and this topic which**

I am discussing separate from real life? Actually, they are not. ... Some people drink coffee to boost their energy in the evening in preparation to stay up late doing their duties. The brothers and sisters worry about their health and cook chicken soup for them. When they finish the soup, these people say, ‘Thanks be to god! I have enjoyed the grace of god. I don’t deserve this. Now that I’ve finished this chicken soup, I have to be more efficient in doing my duties!’ In reality, they continue to do their duties in the same way that they usually do, without raising their efficiency at all. Are they not pretending? They are pretending, and this type of behavior is also covertly exalting and testifying about themselves; the outcome it achieves is to make people approve of them, think highly of them, and become their diehard followers. If people have this sort of mentality, have they not forgotten God? They no longer have God in their hearts, so who is the one they think of day and night? It is their ‘good leader,’ their ‘beloved one.’ Some antichrists are very loving toward most people on the surface, and they employ techniques when they speak, so that people will see that they are loving, and be willing to get closer to them. They beam at anyone who gets close to them and engages with them, and they speak to such people with a very gentle tone. Even if they see that some brothers and sisters have been unprincipled in their actions, and thereby harmed the interests of the church, they do not prune them in the slightest, they merely exhort them and comfort them, and coax them as they do their duties—they coax and coax people until they have brought everyone before them. People are gradually moved by these antichrists; everyone very much approves of their loving hearts and calls them people who love God. Eventually, everyone worships them and seeks their fellowship on every matter, telling these antichrists all of their

innermost thoughts and feelings, to the point that they don't even pray to God or seek the truth in God's words anymore. Have these people not been misled by these antichrists? This is another means that antichrists use to mislead people. When you engage in these behaviors and practices, or harbor these intentions, are you aware that there is a problem within this? And when you become aware of this, can you change the course of your actions? If you can reflect on yourself and feel true remorse when you become aware and examine that your behavior, practices, or intentions are problematic, this proves that you have reversed your course" (The Word, Vol. 4. Exposing Antichrists. Item Four: They Exalt and Testify About Themselves). From the revelation of God's words, I saw that people outwardly adopt various "good" behaviors that conform with man's notions in order to win the admiration and appreciation of others, but in essence, these behaviors are simply a way of covertly exalting and bearing testimony to themselves, which is very hypocritical and can easily mislead people. When I thought about it, I saw that I was that type of person. Outwardly I seemed to be busy performing my duty every day, enduring hardship, paying a price, and taking everything on myself—I seemed to be a qualified and competent team leader. But behind all that, I was harboring my own despicable, secret intent, which was to gain people's admiration. I thought about how the brothers and sisters would come to ask me about all sorts of matters, both big and small, in the course of their duties, and how they relied on me to resolve everything. The fact was that they could have discussed and resolved some of those problems without my involvement. But the thought of how everyone trusted and admired me drove me to throw aside our work priorities and do everything myself, even if I didn't have the time, just to protect my pride and status. Sometimes, if I skipped a meal to host a gathering for new believers, my sisters would urge me to go and eat.

I was actually secretly pleased by the thought of them seeing me too busy with my duties to even eat. I thought that they must admire me and think that I could really endure hardship and pay a price, and that I was a competent team leader. Due to being “busy,” I also enjoyed all sorts of “privileges” and earned sympathy from others, which I used to cover up some of my deviations and inadequacies. For example, if I didn’t write a life experience testimony article, I would justify it by telling myself that I was too busy. When some of the team’s tasks that I was responsible for weren’t done in time, I would indulge myself and say that it was because I was too busy. And when deviations and errors appeared in my duty and I wasn’t getting good results watering new believers, I gave the brothers and sisters the same excuse so that they’d make allowances for me. Just like that, I kept busy all day long, showing people that I was a good team leader with a packed schedule. Not only was I appreciated by my supervisor, I was also admired and relied on by some of the brothers and sisters. And yet, at the same time, I was also covering up the deviations and errors in my work. My intents really were despicable! I thought about why the brothers and sisters liked coming to me whenever they encountered problems and relied on me to do everything—it was mainly because I tried to take on everything myself. My brothers and sisters admired me, I had a place in their hearts, and whenever they encountered problems, they didn’t pray and rely on God, or seek the truth principles, they just came to ask me instead. By keeping busy in that way, I was really just acting willfully, covertly showing off, winning people’s hearts, and keeping them away from God.

At that time, I thought of a passage of God’s words that I had once read: **“Some people seem quite enthusiastic in their belief in God. They love to attend to and concern themselves with the affairs of the church, and they’re always running ahead. And yet, unexpectedly, they**

disappoint everyone once they become leaders. They don't focus on resolving the practical problems of God's chosen people, instead doing their utmost to act for the sake of their own reputation and status. They love showing off to make others esteem them, and they're always talking about how they expend themselves and suffer for God, yet they don't put their efforts into pursuing the truth and their life entry. This isn't what anyone expects of them. Though they busy themselves with their work, show off on every occasion, preach some words and doctrines, gain the esteem and worship of some people, mislead people's hearts, and consolidate their status, what comes of this in the end? Regardless of whether these people use small favors to bribe others, or flaunt their gifts and abilities, or use various methods to mislead people and thereby win their good opinion, no matter what method they use to win over people's hearts and occupy a position therein, what have they lost? They have lost the opportunity to gain the truth while doing the duties of a leader. At the same time, because of their various manifestations, they have also accumulated evil deeds that will bring about their ultimate outcome. Regardless of whether they are using small favors to bribe and ensnare people, or flaunting themselves, or using facades to mislead people, and no matter how many benefits and how much satisfaction they outwardly seem to obtain from doing this, looking at it now, is this path a correct one? Is it the path of pursuing the truth? Is it a path that can bring about one's salvation? Clearly, it is not. Regardless of how smart these methods and tricks are, they cannot deceive God, and they are all ultimately condemned and loathed by God, because hidden behind such behaviors is man's ambition and an attitude and essence of antagonism toward God. In God's heart, He would absolutely never recognize these people as those

who are doing their duties, and would instead define them as evildoers. What verdict does God pass when dealing with evildoers? ‘Depart from Me, you that work iniquity.’ When God says, ‘Depart from Me,’ where does He want such people to go? He is handing them over to Satan, to the places inhabited by throngs of Satans. What is the ultimate consequence for them? They are tormented to death by evil spirits, which is to say they are devoured by Satan. God does not want these people, which means He will not save them, they are not God’s sheep, let alone His followers, so they are not among the ones He will save. This is how these people are defined by God. So, just what is the nature of trying to win over the hearts of others? It is walking the path of an antichrist; it is an antichrist’s behavior and essence. Even more serious is an essence of vying against God for His chosen people; such people are enemies of God. This is how antichrists are defined and categorized, and it is completely accurate” (The Word, Vol. 4. Exposing Antichrists.

Item One: They Try to Win Over People’s Hearts). God’s words revealed my problem exactly. Since becoming a team leader, I had tried to take on everything myself. On the surface, I was an understanding, considerate team leader who actively helped my brothers and sisters with whatever needed doing, but my real intent and goal was to do things that served my own reputation and status, to win people’s hearts, and gain their admiration. That was a kind of fraud and trickery! I was just like the officials under the great red dragon, who deceive ordinary folk by doing a bit of work just to make themselves look good under the guise of “serving the people,” so that they will revere them and sing their praises. I was just the same—outwardly I was busy performing my duty, but secretly I wanted people to think that I worked hard, and wanted them to admire and worship me. Because I took on everything myself, no one else got much of a chance to practice in their

duties. They still admired me nevertheless, to the extent that whenever they encountered any issues, they didn't seek God, they instead relied on me to resolve them. They had no place for God in their hearts. I wasn't performing my duty properly at all! Clearly, I was doing evil and walking the path of the antichrist! I prayed to God and asked Him to lead me in seeking the truth principles to resolve my problems and to stop acting based on my corrupt disposition.

Later, I read another passage of God's words: **"In performing your duty, you are not required to take on everything yourself, nor are you required to work yourself to death, or to be 'the only flower in blossom' or maverick; rather, you are required to learn how to cooperate with others in harmony, and to do all you can, to fulfill your responsibilities, to exert all your energy. That is what it means to perform your duty. To perform your duty is to brandish all the power and light that you have in order to achieve a result. That is enough. Do not try always to show off, always to say high-sounding things, to do things by yourself. You should learn how to work with others, and you should focus more on listening to others' suggestions and discovering their strengths. In this way, cooperating in harmony becomes easy. If you try always to show off and have what you say go, you are not cooperating in harmony. What are you doing? You are causing a disturbance and undermining others. To cause a disturbance and undermine others is to play the role of Satan; it is not the performance of duty. If you always do things that cause a disturbance and undermine others, then no matter how much effort you expend or care you take, God will not remember. You may be of little strength, but if you are capable of working with others, and are able to accept suitable suggestions, and if you have the right motivations, and can protect the work of God's house, then you are a**

right person. Sometimes, with a single sentence, you can solve a problem and benefit everyone; sometimes, after you fellowship on a single statement of the truth, everyone has a path to practice, and is able to work harmoniously together, and all strive toward a common goal, and share the same views and opinions, and so work is particularly effective. Although no one might remember that you played this role, and you might not feel as if you made much effort, God will see that you are a person who practices the truth, a person who acts according to the principles. God will remember your having done so. This is called performing your duty loyally” (The Word, Vol. 3. The

Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. The Proper Fulfillment of Duty Requires Harmonious Cooperation). From God’s words, I saw my problems clearly and found some paths of practice. If I wanted to perform my duty properly, I had to learn to coordinate harmoniously with others, and focus on allowing them to make use of their strengths. There are limits to what one person can do alone—no one is capable of doing all the work by themselves. We can only achieve good results in our duties when we are all of one heart and mind and when all of our respective strengths are put to use. Only when people have the right intents, namely to safeguard the church’s work, are they performing their duties in line with God’s intentions. That is much more effective than one person taking on all of the work. In the past, I not only exhausted myself by busily rushing around and trying to be the only star shining, I also made a mess of my duties. The strengths of my brothers and sisters were not utilized, and a lot of important work was delayed. By comparing the revelation of God’s words to my own behavior, I finally understood why God says that always showing off in one’s duty and not cooperating harmoniously with others disrupts the church’s work.

After that, I consciously put God's words into practice. I divided up the work in a logical way: I mainly took responsibility for following up on key tasks, and I assigned other jobs to suitable brothers and sisters based on their areas of expertise. When the others encountered problems that they couldn't resolve, we all sought the principles together. Once the brothers and sisters understood the principles, they naturally had a direction and a path for performing their duties. Now that I have been putting God's words into practice for a while, I find that my brothers and sisters bear more of a burden in their duties than before. They are able to take initiative and seek the principles to resolve some problems, and they can complete some tasks independently by relying on God. Sometimes, when I encounter difficulties in the tasks I am responsible for, I also seek help from my brothers and sisters, and I gain a lot from it. Our team has been getting better and better results in our work by cooperating like this. The brothers and sisters are able to practice to varying degrees and they have made some progress. I feel much more relaxed and at peace. Gradually, I have begun to find time to reflect on the problems in my own work, and I have started writing experience testimony articles normally again. I don't look as busy as I used to, but I find it easier to identify deviations and problems in the work, and I have become more efficient in my duty.

66. I'm No Longer Disdainful Toward My Partner

By Steven, South Korea

I manage church books and items. I typically check whether the various items are categorized and neatly arranged, and whether check-in and check-out records are clear. I fear a mess would be made of things if I were negligent. Brother Cameron, who worked with me, was rather careless and didn't focus on tidiness. Sometimes, he just threw things down or put them in a pile, so I always worried about him, and always had to check his work. Every time I saw Cameron misplacing things or saw that the check-in and check-out records for the items he wrote were unclear, I got so impatient and angry that I lost my temper and didn't fellowship to help him. At first, I would consider his feelings and be careful with my tone and wording, but as time went on, I didn't care about those things, and at every turn, I would tell him that he did this or that wrong. Sometimes I got angry and scolded him, saying, "Why are you putting things in the wrong place again? You put one here and one there. Can't you put things back where you found them? It would only take a moment to clean up after yourself, but you just have to leave it undone, and you never clean it up afterward."

My attitude toward Cameron got worse and worse. Sometimes, I'd use a commanding tone to tell him to clean up the mess. I remember once, when I was going over the check-in and check-out records, I found that he had corrected some of them so badly that they were illegible. My temper immediately flared up, and I thought, "I can't even guess what he wrote here!" I went straight to Cameron. Like a teacher scolding a student, I held out the records and asked what each one was. I said, "Do you know what I want to do right now? I want to take these records to the leader, so that she can see how you do your duty, and how careless you can be!" Cameron had

a guilty look on his face, and said he would pay attention in the future. He said this time was an accident and that while he was making the record, someone called him to deal with an urgent matter, so he forgot about it. But I didn't let him explain. I said angrily, "If something like this happens again, I'll give the record sheet straight to the leader and let her handle it!" Before long, I saw that one of Cameron's record sheets had an indistinct smear again. This time, I got even angrier. I went to Cameron to question him, "I already told you, if you make a mistake, rewrite it in another place, don't just write over it. Look at your correction. Who knows what you wrote? If I can't see it clearly, I have to come and ask you. Don't you think this is annoying? Even if you don't, I do!" When he saw I was angry again, he picked up the record sheet and said, "Then I'll correct it again." I yelled angrily, "Don't bother! This won't fix it!" I left after I said that, leaving him sitting there alone with the record sheet at a loss. At that point, I realized I had gone a bit too far. But I didn't give it much thought, and the matter passed. After a few days, I got angry with Cameron again over a trivial matter. He got angry at me too, and we got into an argument.

The leader found that we couldn't work together harmoniously, so she fellowshipped with me and read me a passage of God's word: **"Whatever duty an antichrist is doing, whomever they're partnered with, there will always be conflicts and disputes. Some may say, 'If they're in charge of cleaning and they tidy up inside every day, what's there for them to be uncooperative with others about?' There's a dispositional problem in it: Whomever they're interacting with or doing a job with, they'll always scorn them, always wishing to lecture them, to have them do what they say. Would you say that such a person can be cooperative with others? They can't be cooperative with anyone; this is because their corrupt disposition is too severe. Not only can't they cooperate**

with others, they're also always lecturing and constraining others from above—they wish always to sit astride people's shoulders and force their obedience. This isn't a mere dispositional problem—it's also a serious problem with their humanity. They have no conscience or reason. ... There are certain conditions that must be met for people to get along with each other normally: Before they can cooperate with each other, they must at least have a conscience and reason, and be patient and tolerant. People must be of one mind in order to be able to cooperate in doing a duty; they must draw on the other's strengths and offset their own weaknesses, and be patient and tolerant, and have a baseline to their comportment. That's how to get along in harmony, and though there may be conflicts and disputes at times, the cooperation can continue, and at least no enmity will arise. If one person has no such baseline, and isn't conscientious or reasonable, and does things in a profit-focused way, seeking profit alone, wishing always to profit at others' expense, cooperation will be impossible. This is how it is among evil people, and among devil kings, who do battle with each other, without cease. The various evil spirits of the spiritual realm don't get along with each other. Though devils may, at times, form consortia, it's all about mutual exploitation in order to achieve their own goals. Their consortia are temporary, and before long, they shatter on their own. It's the same among people. People without humanity are bad apples that ruin the bunch; only those with normal humanity are easy to cooperate with, patient and tolerant of others, able to heed others' opinions, and able to set aside their status in the work they do, to do it in discussion with others. They, too, have corrupt dispositions, and always wish to make others heed them—they, too, have that intention—but because they have a conscience and reason, and can seek the truth,

and know themselves, and feel that doing so is inappropriate, for which they feel reproach, and they are able to curb themselves, their ways and means of doing things will change, bit by bit. And thus, they'll be able to cooperate with others. They're revealing a corrupt disposition, but they're not evil people, and they don't have the essence of antichrists. They won't have any major problems cooperating with others. If they were evil people or antichrists, they'd be unable to cooperate with others. This is how all the evil people and antichrists are whom God's house clears out. They're unable to cooperate with anyone, and they all get revealed and eliminated as a result" (The Word, Vol. 4. Exposing Antichrists.

Item Eight: They Would Have Others Submit Only to Them, Not the Truth or God (Part One)).

After reading God's word, the leader reminded me saying, "To get along with people, we at least need to respect them. If you yell at Cameron like this and reprimand him all the time, you lack even the most basic respect. Isn't this overly arrogant of you? You look down on everything he does, and never let his problems go. Is this appropriate? Cameron is busy with work and his memory is bad. Some problems are unavoidable. Shouldn't you treat him properly and help him more? Moreover, he is constantly improving. But you constantly yelled at him. This is a corrupt disposition; it is also a problem with humanity. Aren't you just staring at the speck in your brother's eye but blind to the beam in your own?" Then, the leader read me another passage of God's word that said: **"What do you say, is it hard to cooperate with other people? It isn't, actually. You could even say it is easy. But why do people still feel this to be difficult? Because they have corrupt dispositions. For those who possess humanity, conscience, and reason, cooperating with others is relatively easy, and they can feel that this is something joyful. This is because it is not easy for anyone to accomplish things on their own, and whatever the field they're involved**

in, or what they're doing, it is always good to have someone there to point things out and offer assistance—much easier than doing it by themselves. Also, there are limits to what people's caliber is capable of or what they themselves can experience. No one can be a master of all trades: It is impossible for one person to know everything, to be capable of everything, to accomplish everything—that is impossible, and everyone should possess such reason. And so, no matter what you do, whether it be important or not, you will always need someone there to help you, to give you pointers and advice, or to do things in cooperation with you. This is the only way to ensure that you will do things more correctly, make fewer mistakes and be less likely to go astray—it is a good thing” (The Word, Vol. 4. Exposing Antichrists. Item Eight: They Would Have Others Submit Only to Them, Not the Truth or God (Part One)). After reading God's words, the leader fellowshipped some more, and finally asked me, “If you were to manage the items by yourself, could you do it without making any mistakes?” In shame, I said, “No.” The leader said, “That's right. No one knows everything, and everyone needs a partner to perform their duties. If you can't cooperate harmoniously, how can you do your duty well? You need to contemplate this and reflect on your own problems.”

When I came back, I felt really terrible. How could I be unaware of such a big problem I had? I used to think that my humanity was good and I could get along with my brothers and sisters, but ever since cooperating with Cameron in my duty, I was always self-righteous, thinking that my ideas and actions were right. I imposed my will on him and made him do what I wanted. I didn't help him by fellowshipping on the truth, I just got angry, accused him, and reprimanded him. I had no humanity or reason! I always felt that I was better than my brother, so I looked down on him. I found him unpleasant, and I couldn't address his strengths and weaknesses

correctly. I showed off at every turn and belittled him. Originally, Cameron and I were responsible for managing church items together, but I didn't discuss anything with him. I was always self-centered, and had the final say, and I gave orders to Cameron. I often scolded him and lectured him like he was a child. My disposition was too arrogant, and God hated it! I knew that I was arrogant and always forced others to listen to me, but I didn't know how to solve this problem. I prayed to God and looked for relevant passages of God's word. I read these words of God: **"Antichrists always have the ambition and desire to control and conquer people. This problem is more serious than that of their inability to cooperate with anyone. What sort of people would you say are those who like controlling and conquering others? What sort of person has the ambition and desire to control and conquer others? I'll give you an example. Do those who particularly like status enjoy controlling and conquering others? Aren't they the ilk of antichrists? They mislead, control, and subdue other people, who then worship and heed them. They thus gain people's esteem and respect, and get people to worship and look up to them. Is there not then a place for them in people's hearts? If people weren't convinced by them and didn't approve of them, would they worship them? Absolutely not. So, after these people have status, they still need to convince others, to completely win them over, and to make them admire them. Only then will people worship them. That's one sort of person. There's another—those who are particularly arrogant. They treat people in the same way: They begin by subduing people, making everyone worship and admire them. Only then are they satisfied. Very vicious people also like controlling others, having people heed them, be in their orbit, and do things for them. When it comes to both very arrogant people and people with vicious dispositions, once they've**

taken power, they become antichrists. Antichrists always have an ambition and desire to control and conquer others; in their encounters with people, they always wish to ascertain how others see them, and whether there's a place for them in others' hearts, and whether others admire and worship them. If they encounter someone who is good at bootlicking, flattery and fawning, they get very happy; they then begin to stand on high, lecturing people and prattling on about high-sounding ideas, inculcating people with regulations, methods, doctrines, and notions. They have people accept these things as the truth, and even put a lovely face on them: 'If you can accept these things, you're someone who loves and pursues the truth.' Undiscerning people will think what they're saying is reasonable, and though it is indistinct to them, and they do not know whether it's in line with the truth, they feel only that there's nothing wrong with what they're saying, and that it doesn't violate the truth. And so, they obey the antichrists. If someone is able to discern an antichrist and may expose them, it will rile the antichrist, who will unceremoniously heap blame on them, condemn them, and threaten them, with a show of force. Those without discernment get entirely subdued by the antichrist and admire them from the bottom of their hearts, giving rise in them to worship of the antichrist, reliance on them, and even dread. They have a sense of being enslaved by the antichrist, as if they'd be unsettled at heart if they lost the antichrist's leadership, teachings, and reproaches. Without these things, it's as though they'd have no sense of security, and God might not want them anymore. Then, everyone has learned to watch the antichrist's expression when they act, for fear that the antichrist will be unhappy. They all attempt to please them; such people are dead set on following the antichrist. In their work, antichrists preach words and doctrines.

They're good at teaching people to adhere to certain regulations; they never tell people what the truth principles they should adhere to are, why they must act in this way, what God's intentions are, what arrangements God's house has made for the work, what the most essential and important work is, or what the primary work to be done is. Antichrists say nothing at all about these important things. They never fellowship the truth when doing and arranging work. They themselves don't understand the truth principles, so all they can do is teach people to adhere to a few regulations and doctrines—and if people should go against their sayings and regulations, they'll face the antichrists' reprimand and rebuke. Antichrists often do work under the banner of God's house, rebuking others and lecturing them from a high position. Some people even get so flustered by their lecture that they feel they're indebted to God by not acting according to the antichrists' requirements. Have such people not come under the antichrists' control? (They have.) What sort of behavior is this, on the antichrists' part? It's behavior of enslavement” (The Word, Vol. 4. Exposing

Antichrists. Item Eight: They Would Have Others Submit Only to Them, Not the Truth or God (Part One)). What God described was precisely my state. When working with Cameron, I found him to be easy-going. If something went wrong at work, he accepted it when I criticized him and didn't try to refute it. I thought that he was soft and easy to push around, so I was overbearing toward him, and I had the final say in everything. Many times, when I discussed things with him I was just going through the motions. In the end, I decided what to do. Also, some precautions I formulated for managing items appeared to be unproblematic and help to manage items, but I didn't formulate these precautions based on relevant principles. Rather, I created them to address Cameron's problems. You could say they were tailor-made for him.

Whenever he failed to follow these precautions, I had an excuse to accuse him and reprimand him, and he had no way to protest. Just like last time, when he didn't do the record sheet as I instructed, I scolded him without hesitation and forced him to do what I wanted. I remembered what he said that day, "As soon as I see you cleaning things up, I try to avoid you. I'm afraid you'll criticize me again if I don't do it right." The thought made me miserable. The satanic disposition I revealed cast a shadow over my brother's heart and constrained him. It's just as God's word exposes: **"If people should go against their sayings and regulations, they'll face the antichrists' reprimand and rebuke. Antichrists often do work under the banner of God's house, rebuking others and lecturing them from a high position. Some people even get so flustered by their lecture that they feel they're indebted to God by not acting according to the antichrists' requirements. Have such people not come under the antichrists' control?"** I finally realized my problem was serious. Since partnering with Cameron, my antichrist disposition was revealed. I had no status at the moment, but if I had status, wouldn't it be even easier to constrain and control people? At that point, wouldn't I be an antichrist? I usually didn't focus on seeking the truth or reflecting on myself. I often showed a corrupt disposition without being aware of it. I was incredibly numb. I thought of God's words: **"If you are a member of God's house, yet you are always hot-headed in your actions, always expose what is natural in you, and always reveal your corrupt disposition, doing things with human means and with a corrupt, satanic disposition, the final consequence will be your doing evil and your resisting God—and if you remain unrepentant all the while and cannot tread upon the path of pursuing truth, you will have to be revealed and eliminated"** (The Word,

Accepting the Truth). I recalled how I treated Cameron. To vent my dissatisfaction for temporary relief, I completely disregarded my brother's feelings. When I got angry because Cameron's record sheet was illegible, I lectured Cameron like a child who made a mistake. He just sat there without saying a word, and when he admitted he was wrong, I coldly rejected it. That image was frozen in my mind, impossible to forget. When I thought about it, I couldn't express the guilt and pain in my heart. I asked myself, "How could I treat my brother like this? I've never fellowshiped or helped him, so who am I to scold him? What gall do I have to call him my brother?" Every question left me speechless. In the past, I always thought Cameron was to blame, that it was him who had too many faults and caused me so much trouble. Now I realized that it was me who had the real problem. It was me who hadn't changed even after many reminders, and it was me who was too arrogant and had no humanity! I felt intense remorse, so I silently prayed to God and said I wanted to repent.

Afterward, I sought how to treat my brothers and sisters in accordance with principles. In God's word, I read this passage: **"There must be principles to how brothers and sisters interact. Do not always focus on others' faults, instead you must examine yourself frequently, and then proactively admit to other people what things you have done that caused interference or harm to them, and learn to open yourself up and fellowship. In this way, you can achieve mutual understanding. What's more, no matter what befalls you, you should view things based on the words of God. If people are able to understand the truth principles and find a path of practice, they will become of one heart and mind, and the relationship between the brothers and sisters will be normal, they will not be as indifferent, cold, and cruel as the nonbelievers, and they will shed their mentality of mutual suspicion and wariness. The brothers**

and sisters will become more intimate with each other; they will be able to support and love each other; there will be goodwill in their hearts, and they will be capable of tolerance and compassion toward each other, and they will support and help one another, instead of alienating each other, being envious of each other, measuring themselves against one another, and secretly competing and being defiant toward each other. How can people perform their duties well if they are like the nonbelievers? Not only will this impact their life entry, it will also harm and affect others. ... When people live by their corrupt dispositions, it is very hard for them to be at peace before God, and it is very difficult for them to practice the truth and live by God's words. To live before God, you must first learn how to reflect on and know yourself, and truly pray to God, and then you must learn how to get on with the brothers and sisters. You must be tolerant of each other, lenient with each other, and be able to see what others' strengths and merits are—you must learn to accept others' opinions and things that are right. Don't indulge yourself, don't have ambitions and desires and always think you're better than other people, and then think of yourself as some great figure, forcing other people to do what you say, to obey you, to look up to you, to exalt you—this is deviant. ... So how does God treat people? God does not care what people look like, whether they're tall or short. Instead, He looks at whether their hearts are kind, whether they love the truth, and whether they love and submit to Him. This is what God bases His behavior toward people on. If people can also do this, they will be able to treat others fairly, and in accordance with the truth principles. First of all, we must understand the intentions of God, and know how God behaves toward men, then we too will have a principle and path for how to behave toward people”

(The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. Part Three). Yeah. When we interact with each other in our duties, we should at least live out normal humanity, support and help each other, be tolerant and patient, take care of each other, fellowship on the truth to help people when they go against principles, and in serious cases, we can expose and prune them. This is the only way to do things in line with principles. The brothers and sisters come from different places, and everyone's living circumstances, experience, age and caliber are different. No matter what their deficiencies or shortcomings are, we should treat them properly, never ask too much of them, and be considerate and tolerant of them. Cameron was usually busy with maintenance. In addition, he wasn't good at making the check-in and check-out records of the items. I should have taken more responsibility and been more understanding, and I shouldn't have forced him to do things my way. I was utterly without humanity. My brother was good at maintenance, conscientious in his repair work, and didn't fear suffering in his duty. In this respect, he was far superior to me. But I didn't look at my brother's strengths. I focused on his shortcomings, accused him, and scolded him. I was so arrogant and stupid!

Later, I consciously changed my state and practiced according to principles. When things happened again, I was much calmer, and I was also more understanding of Cameron. Once, I went out to run an errand and needed to stay there for some time, and Cameron was left to manage things on his own. A few days later, I called Cameron to ask how the process was going. Calmly and cautiously, he said, "How do you think? Exactly the way you think it's going." Hearing this, I felt very upset. Why would my brother say such a thing? Wasn't it because the way I treated him in the past flowed from my corrupt disposition, and always made him feel that he was nothing and couldn't do anything well? The more I thought about it, the more it

hurt, but it strengthened my determination to practice the truth and change myself. I comforted Cameron, saying, “Just look around at what’s out of place and take the time to tidy up. You’re usually busy with other things, so a little messiness is inevitable. If you really don’t have time to clean up, we can do it together when I get back.” After the call, I thought Cameron wouldn’t be able to manage by himself, so I asked others to help him. When similar things happened in the past, I always scolded and reprimanded him for his mistakes. Now, when the same things happen again, I can approach it correctly, and can also fellowship and help him. This makes me feel at peace and at ease. Although it’s a small change, I am happy, because I think it’s a good start. I believe if I practice and enter by God’s words, I will be able to cast off my corrupt disposition. Thank Almighty God!

67. One Ordeal After Another

By Liu Yi, China

One morning in April of 2009, at around 9 a.m., Sister Ding Ning and I were rushed by eight men the moment we stepped out onto the street after a gathering. Without so much as saying a single word, they immediately pulled our hands behind our backs and confiscated our bags and over 40,000 yuan in church funds. I was completely taken off guard and before I had time to react, I had already been escorted into their vehicle. Soon after, I heard a woman say, “The suspects are in our custody.” It was only then that I realized that we’d been apprehended by the police. I was enraged that they had stolen such a large sum of our church funds and thought, “These officers just arbitrarily arrested us and took our money in broad daylight—where is the rule of law?” I was feeling a bit frightened and my heart was racing, so I continually prayed to God. I asked God to protect my heart so that no matter how the officers tortured and interrogated me, I wouldn’t betray God like Judas and could stand firm in my testimony for Him. After prayer, I felt a sense of calm come over me.

The officers took us to a remote place and split us up for interrogation. The interrogation room had a gloomy and ominous feel to it and the officers inside appeared fiendish and sinister. One of the officers started the interrogation by asking, “Are you a church leader? What is your relationship to Ding Ning? How did you both meet? Is she your upper leader?” I replied, saying, “I’m not a leader and I don’t know who this ‘Ding Ning’ is you speak of.” This enraged him and he slapped me across the face and kicked me twice before yelling, “So it looks like I’m going to have to do this the hard way in order for you to confess.” After saying that, he began punching me repeatedly in the face. I lost track of how many

times he hit me—blood streamed from my lips, my face was swollen to the point of disfigurement and I was wracked by searing pain. But he didn't let up even then and continued to rain fists down on my head, leaving me with a painfully swollen lump on my forehead. I thought to myself, "They are merciless in their beatings. What will I do if I get a concussion from these brutal beatings? What if they beat me to the point that I get serious brain damage? How will I continue to believe in God then?" The more I thought about it, the more fearful I became. I quietly prayed to God, asking Him to protect my heart. After prayer, I recalled this passage of God's words: **"Who of the whole of mankind is not cared for in the eyes of the Almighty? Who does not live in the midst of the Almighty's predestination? Does man's life and death happen by his own choice? Does man control his own fate?"** (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. God's Words to the Entire Universe, Chapter 11). God is the Creator and He rules over all things. My life was in His hands and Satan had no say over whether I'd be crippled or beaten to the point of brain damage. I was willing to put my life in God's hands. Realizing this, I felt a bit more at peace and thought, "These devils had better give up on thinking they'll get the slightest bit of information from me. I will never give in to them!"

After that, the officers took me to a hotel and continued interrogating me. A female officer shrilly grilled me, asking, "What is your name? How many host families have you stayed with? Who do you know? Where does your church keep its funds?" When I wouldn't reply, she charged up in front of me, slapped me twice across the face and made me take off my shoes before trampling over my toes with her leather shoes. A searing pain immediately shot through my whole body and I couldn't help but cry out in agony. She trampled on my bleeding toes while saying, "If you can't take the pain, just tell us what we want to hear!" The pain was truly unbearable

and so I called out to God, “Oh God! If they don’t get what they want, they won’t let up on me. I’m worried that I won’t be able to withstand their torture. Please guide me.” After prayer, I suddenly remembered that God was my shield and with God leading the way, what was there to fear? No matter how the police tortured me, I wouldn’t betray God or sell out the church. Seeing that I still wouldn’t talk, another officer handcuffed my hands behind my back and forcibly pulled my hands upward as he interrogated me. I immediately felt a pain in my arm like it had been dislocated and, before long, the backs of my hands began to swell severely. Another officer threatened me, “If you don’t start talking, we’ll strip you naked, hang a sign from your neck and then put you on top of a squad car and parade you around town. We’ll see if you have any dignity left after that!” Hearing this, I became very worried and thought, “These devils are truly evil and it seems as though there’s nothing they won’t do. If they really do strip me naked and parade me around town, how will I be able to show my face in public and go on living after that?” Just as I was feeling most weak and distressed, I recalled the hymn of God’s words **“God Suffers Great Torment for Man’s Salvation.”** It says that: **“This time, God has become flesh to perform the work that He has not yet completed, to judge this age and bring it to a close, to save man from the sea of suffering, to thoroughly conquer humanity, and to change people’s life dispositions. Many are the sleepless nights that God has endured to free man from suffering and from the dark forces that are as black as night, and for the sake of the work of mankind. He has descended from the highest to the lowest of places to live in this human hell and pass His days with man. God has never complained of the shabbiness among man, nor has He ever asked too much of man; rather, God has endured the greatest humiliation while carrying out**

His work. So that all of humanity may soon enjoy rest, God has endured humiliation and suffered injustice to come to earth, and personally entered into the tiger's den to save mankind" (The Word, Vol. 1.

The Appearance and Work of God. Work and Entry). As I pondered over God's words, I was deeply moved. God is holy—in order to save humankind, who had been deeply corrupted by Satan, He came twice in the flesh. He first came to redeem mankind and was crucified, suffering unbearable torment. In the last days, He has come again in the flesh to China and has suffered persecution and manhunts by the CCP as well as condemnation, slander, and rejection from the religious world all in order to thoroughly save mankind from their sinfulness. God has quietly endured all of this and continues to express truths and performs the work to save us—His love for us is truly so great. I was lucky enough to accept God's work in the last days and enjoy the supply of God's words, so I knew I should repay God's love. Having made these realizations, I knew that the pain and humiliation were all meaningful and valuable—it was enduring persecution in the name of righteousness. I silently prayed to God, "Oh God! No matter how the officers humiliate me, I will stand firm in my testimony to satisfy You!" After prayer, I didn't feel quite as afraid. After that, no matter how the officers threatened me, I didn't say a word and they had no other choice but to leave.

Several days later, when the officers concluded they wouldn't be able to extract any information from me, they sent me to a detention center. As soon as I arrived, a female officer intentionally humiliated me by ordering me to take off all my clothes and spin around in circles, as well as squat down with my hands behind my head and do frog jumps. Forty-two days later, I was given a trumped-up charge of "using a cult organization to undermine the enforcement of the law" and sentenced to a year and a half

of reeducation through labor. It was going to be incredibly difficult to go over a year without reading God's words, gathering, fellowshiping and doing my duty, I thought. I silently prayed to God, "Oh God! I don't know what torment lies ahead and if I'll be able to withstand it. Please guide me to understand Your intention, so that I can stand strong in this environment." After prayer, I recalled this passage of God's words: **"Do not be discouraged, do not be weak, and I will make things clear for you. The road to the kingdom is not so smooth; nothing is that simple! You want blessings to come to you easily, do you not? Today, everyone will have bitter trials to face. Without such trials, the loving heart you have for Me will not grow stronger and you will not have true love for Me. Even if these trials consist merely of minor circumstances, everyone must pass through them; it's just that the difficulty of the trials will vary from one person to another. Trials are a blessing from Me, and how many of you come often before Me and beg on your knees for My blessings? Silly children! You always think that a few auspicious words count as My blessing, yet you do not recognize that bitterness is one of My blessings. Those who share in My bitterness will certainly share in My sweetness. That is My promise and My blessing to you"** (The Word, Vol.

1. The Appearance and Work of God. Utterances of Christ in the Beginning, Chapter 41). God's words helped me realize that this environment would help perfect my faith and strengthen my will to endure suffering. Only by going through suffering would I be able to pray and rely on God more and draw closer to Him. Despite the fact that I wouldn't be able to read God's words or gather and fellowship with brothers and sisters for the next year and a half, God would still be with me and so I had to rely on God and stand firm in my testimony to humiliate Satan. After coming to understand God's intention, I felt a renewed sense of faith and strength. During my time in the labor camp, I

would often pray to God and ponder over His words. Thanks to the guidance of God's words, I was able to make it through the long days of my confinement.

After being released, I began doing my duty again, but in October of 2013, I was once again arrested. That day, at around four in the afternoon, I was just returning from spreading the gospel and was disembarking from the bus, when I was rushed by a group of three people and held down. One of them said, "It's been a few years now, do you still recognize me? Why don't you come for a little ride with us?" I immediately panicked, thinking, "Now I'm in for it. Now that the police have me detained, they certainly won't let me off easily." They forced me into their cruiser and sat on either side of me, holding my hands down so I couldn't move. After that, I was sent to a brainwashing center and accompanied at all times by two "escorts." In that place, from 7:30 in the morning until 7:00 in the evening, to get me to betray God, I was forced to watch videos that blasphemed God and discredited the church, as well as videos that extolled the CCP. The escorts monitored me 24 hours a day and I wasn't allowed to pray or even close the door when going to the bathroom. The long hours of brainwashing and constant surveillance left me feeling repressed—I felt anxious and on edge every day, and was terrified that if I wasn't careful, I would fall for Satan's plot. I just continually prayed to God and beseeched Him to protect my heart.

One day, Chen, who oversaw brainwashing, brought me a copy of **The Word Appears in the Flesh** and said, "This is your church's book—do you still think this is the word of God? It's clearly written by a mere person." I took the book of God's words and thought, "Each of God's words is the truth; you devils don't believe in God, so how could you possibly understand His words?" I opened up the book and saw the following

passage: **“The utmost faith and love are required from us in this stage of work. We may stumble from the slightest carelessness, for this stage of work is different from all the previous ones: What God is perfecting is mankind’s faith, which is both invisible and intangible. What God does is convert words to faith, to love, and to life”** (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. The Path ... (8)). Reading these words, I felt God’s encouragement and comfort. God’s work in the last days is the work of words. He arranges all kinds of situations to allow people to experience His words, allowing those words to become a part of people, to become their life. This is how God saves and perfects mankind. I thought of how God’s words gave me faith and strength to overcome the devils’ abuse during the torture and torment of my first arrest. Now during this current arrest, when I was feeling tormented, anguished, and repressed due to being continually monitored and brainwashed with heresies and fallacies, God arranged for the officer to show me a copy of His words, which filled me with faith and strength. Despite the perilous ordeals that befell me within the hellish prison, I truly didn’t feel alone, knowing that God was always protecting me and using His words to guide me. After that, no matter how the officers tried to brainwash me with Satan’s heresies and fallacies, I would consciously quiet my thoughts before God and pray to and rely upon Him so that I didn’t fall for Satan’s plots. An officer showed me a picture of a sister and asked if I recognized her. When I wouldn’t respond, he tried to intimidate and trick me by saying, “The others already sold you out. They told us you’re a leader, but here you are still trying to protect them. They already all confessed and were sent home. You’re just being stupid by not speaking and you’ll be in for a long, long prison sentence! The sooner you start talking, the sooner we can send you home.” I was shocked when I heard this, thinking, “Someone sold me out? Then the officers must know

all about me! If I don't start talking, I might really be in for a long sentence. Perhaps, I can just tell them some insignificant details, so that if I really do have to go to prison, at least I can get a reduced sentence and not have to suffer as much." But then I thought, "If I tell them details, won't I be betraying God and selling out my brothers and sisters? That won't do, I can't tell them anything!" Just then, I recalled God's words which say: **"In the future I will bring retribution upon each person according to what they have done. I have said all that there is to say, for this is precisely the work I do"** (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. The Evil Will Surely Be Punished). God's words helped me understand how He treats people according to how they have acted. If I were to sell out my brothers and sisters, I would be acting like a shameful Judas and God would curse and punish me. If others sold me out, that was their evildoing, but I could not betray God or sell out other brothers and sisters. I recalled how a sister had been arrested, subjected to brutal torture, and given a 9-year prison sentence, but she never gave in to Satan and continued to do her duty when she was released. Despite experiencing some suffering, she had stood firm in her testimony and God approved of her. There was also Peter who, in the Age of Grace, was crucified upside down after being arrested and bore testimony to his love of God. Recalling these stories, I felt deeply encouraged and my heart was filled with faith and strength. I made a silent resolution: No matter how long I have to stay in prison, I will never betray God or sell out my brothers and sisters!

After that, they continued interrogating me, asking, "Who are you in contact with? Who is your upper leader? Where do they live?" When I wouldn't answer, they made me stand facing the wall and took two-hour shifts, with two officers assigned to each shift, to make sure I didn't fall asleep over the course of 24 hours. If they saw me nodding off, they would

yell out, “Don’t you dare close your eyes or pray to your God!” After standing for an entire day, my legs were so swollen that they became stretched and shiny and I could no longer fit into my shoes and had to go barefoot. My back was also so sore that I thought I’d broken something. They tortured me in this way for a whole seven days and seven nights. I was completely exhausted both in body and mind and my body was reaching the breaking point, so I quietly called out in prayer to God, asking Him to give me the faith and strength to overcome the savagery of these devils. After prayer, I recalled God’s words which say: **“During these last days you must bear testimony to God. No matter how great your suffering, you should walk until the very end, and even at your last breath, still you must be faithful to God and at the mercy of God; only this is truly loving God, and only this is the strong and resounding testimony”** (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. Only by Experiencing Painful Trials Can You Know the Loveliness of God). God’s words filled me with faith. No matter how the police tortured me, they couldn’t control my heart. As long as I was still living and breathing, I would stand firm in my testimony to humiliate Satan. Later on, one of the officers brought out a statement blaspheming God and asked me to sign my name. When I didn’t sign, they slapped me multiple times across the face and viciously spouted, “You’re just a piece of meat on the cutting block and we can chop you up however we like. Every day that you don’t sign your name and don’t tell us what we want to know is another day where we let you have it. We have eighteen different forms of torture available here for your ‘leisurely enjoyment.’ We could kill you and no one would ever find out!” After saying this, they began kicking and punching me. They beat me for over 10 minutes—I felt dazed, my face was swollen, my head was throbbing, I heard a loud ringing in my ears, and blood ran from my mouth. My face hurt so much that it felt

like someone had thrown salt on a fresh burn wound. I was worried that if they kept on beating me like that, I would inevitably die. Just then, I recalled a passage of God's words: **"When people are ready to sacrifice their lives, everything becomes trifling, and no one can get the better of them. What could be more important than life?"** (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. Interpretations of the Mysteries of "God's Words to the Entire Universe," Chapter 36). God's words gave me faith and strength. My life and death were in God's hands and without His permission, Satan could not take my life away. Even if I were to be tortured to death, it would be with God's permission. I was ready to submit to God's orchestrations and arrangements and would stand firm in my testimony to satisfy Him even if it meant my death.

After that, they relentlessly intimidated and coerced me to sign a statement that was blasphemous toward God. When I wouldn't sign it, they forced me to sit in a squat while they beat me with a metal rod on my legs and back. Another time, an officer beat me so hard on my back that it felt like something had broken and I cried out involuntarily. He then lit a cigarette and blew the smoke in my eyes while forcing me to keep my eyes open. There was a painful burning sensation in my eyes and tears and snot came streaming from my eyes and nose. I couldn't stop coughing from the smoke and tried to move my head out of the way, but the officer grabbed me by the hair to hold my head in place and continued blowing smoke. As he laughed maniacally, he said, "How do you like that? If you can't take it, just sign the paper and tell us what you know. If you don't talk, you'll be in for it. Tomorrow I'll buy another pack of cigarettes and smoke you out again." By the time that cigarette had burned down, my clothes were completely drenched in sweat. The officer then forced me to assume a squat position again, but I was completely exhausted, my entire body trembled

and I was so weak that I felt that I would collapse at any moment. They continued to torture me in this way for another two hours. Later, they blew smoke in my face with another two cigarettes—I was in utter agony, there was a terribly oppressive feeling in my chest and abdomen and my fingers had become rigid and curled. They grabbed my hand and tried to force me to sign the document, but I quietly prayed to God and wouldn't let them budge my hand an inch. In the end, I didn't sign that document that blasphemed God, but the officers weren't done with me—to force me to sign, one of the officers grabbed me by my hair and slammed my head on a wall, leaving me with a large, swollen lump on my head. After that, he hit me hard on the face, kicked me in the legs and stomach, which left me feeling dizzy and numb throughout my body. Once the officer got tired from beating me, he grabbed an electric baton and began tasing me on my face, chest, and other parts of my body. It felt like I was being stabbed with needles throughout my body. I continually prayed to God, asking Him to fill me with the faith and strength to stand firm. As he tased me, the officer viciously threatened, “I'm going to torture you until you get internal damage. When you leave here, you'll be riddled with illnesses and die a slow death!” The more these officers spoke, the more I hated them. I thought of God's words, which say: **“How can this devil, apoplectic with rage, allow God to have control over its imperial court on the earth? How can it willingly bow down to His superior might? Its hideous countenance has been revealed for what it is, so that one knows not whether to laugh or cry, and it is truly difficult to speak of. Is this not its substance? With an ugly soul, it still believes that it is beautiful beyond belief. This gang of accomplices in crime! They come down into the mortal realm to indulge in pleasures and cause a commotion, stirring things up so much that the world becomes a fickle and**

inconstant place and the heart of man is filled with panic and unease, and they have toyed with man so much that his appearance has become that of an inhuman beast of the field, supremely ugly, and from which the last trace of the original holy man has been lost. Furthermore, they even wish to assume sovereign power on earth. They impede the work of God so much that it can barely inch forward, and they close man off as tightly as walls of copper and steel. Having committed so many grievous sins and caused so many disasters, are they still expecting something other than chastisement?” (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. Work and Entry (7)). The CCP is the devil that hates and resists God. The more they tortured me, the more clearly I could see them for how ugly and repulsive they truly were. I hated them with all my being, rebelled against them and felt even more motivated to follow and satisfy God. After that, the officer tried to intimidate me again by saying, “Even if you don’t talk, you’ll still be convicted and will be sent to jail for over ten years!” I was outraged and thought, “If I have to go to jail, then so be it. No matter how many years I’m sentenced to, I’ll never give in to you devils!” Ultimately, they were unable to ascertain any information from me and, in July of 2014, they slapped me with a trumped-up charge of “using a cult organization to undermine the enforcement of the law” and sentenced me to four years in prison.

Thinking back on the two times I was arrested and imprisoned, the CCP used various methods to try to get me to betray God, including savage beatings, intimidation, brainwashing and humiliation. Throughout each of these ordeals, if I hadn’t had God’s protection and the faith and strength instilled in me through God’s words, I would have been tortured to death by the officers long ago. Through these ordeals, I experienced God’s love firsthand and witnessed the authority and power of His words. It is God’s

words that guided me through these tribulations. No matter how the CCP persecutes me, I will continue following God and doing my duty to repay God's love.

68. The Pain Brought by Reputation and Status

By Fangxiang, China

In March 2020, I was promoted to a team leader and was in charge of the watering work for several groups. This made me very happy, but I was also a bit worried. I had never been in charge of any work before—if I couldn't resolve my brothers' and sisters' problems, and couldn't manage the work well, what would my brothers and sisters think of me? It would be so embarrassing to be dismissed if I couldn't handle the work. Despite being a little worried, I knew that this was my duty and I should accept it from God and submit, so I accepted the duty. Seeing that I was still unfamiliar with the work, my partnered sister first put me in charge of just two groups. When I thought about how I had to gather with the other brothers and sisters, I got so nervous. In the past, I was just a waterer, so if my fellowship was a little superficial or I didn't fulfill my duties adequately, this was considered fairly normal. But now I was a team leader and was expected to fellowship the truth to resolve my brothers' and sisters' states, as well as help them through any problems or difficulties they were having in their duties. Only then would people approve of me and say that I was a capable worker. If I was unable to resolve their problems, they would inevitably look down on me, and have a lowered opinion of me. Thinking of all of this, I felt less sure of myself and thought it would be better to continue doing my previous duty. At least then my inadequacies wouldn't be so thoroughly exposed, and I could preserve some face. For the next few days, I kept getting distracted while thinking about all this. During gatherings, I couldn't quiet down my heart. I kept worrying that my brothers and sisters would look down on me if I didn't fellowship well, and the more I worried, the more nervous I became. I couldn't see the root of

my brothers' and sisters' problems or help resolve them, and I was even scared to go to gatherings. I was incredibly distressed, so I prayed to God many times, asking that He guide me to better understand my state.

Later, I saw a passage of God's words: **"All corrupted humans suffer from a common problem: When they have no status, they do not put on airs when interacting or speaking with anyone, nor do they adopt a certain style or tone in their speech; they are simply ordinary and normal, and do not need to package themselves. They do not feel any psychological pressure, and can fellowship openly and from the heart. They are approachable and are easy to interact with; others feel that they are very good people. As soon as they attain status, they become high and mighty, they ignore ordinary people, nobody can approach them; they feel that they have a sort of nobility, and that they and ordinary people are cut from different cloths. They look down on ordinary people, put on airs when they speak, and stop fellowshiping openly with others. Why do they no longer fellowship openly? They feel that they now have status, and are leaders. They think that leaders must have a certain image, be a bit loftier than ordinary people, have more stature and are better able to assume responsibility; they believe that compared to ordinary people, leaders must have more patience, be able to suffer and expend more, and be able to withstand any temptation from Satan. Even if their parents or other family members die, they feel they must have the self-control to not cry, or that they must cry in secret at the very least, out of sight of others, so that no one can see any of their shortcomings, defects, or weaknesses. They even feel that leaders cannot let anyone know if they have become negative; instead, they must hide all such things. They believe this is how one with status should act. When they repress themselves to this extent, has**

status not become their god, their lord? And this being so, do they still possess normal humanity? When they have these ideas—when they put themselves in this box, and put on this kind of act—have they not become enamored with status?” (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. How to Resolve the Temptations and Bondage of Status). God’s words revealed to me how I was unable to live freely because I was bound and constrained by status and reputation. Before I became a team leader, I would always discuss work and talk through problems with everybody. I thought that since we were all brothers and sisters, we all had more or less similar stature, and so I didn’t worry about what others thought of me and was able to be open and free. But as soon as I became a team leader, I suddenly thought that since I had a higher status than my brothers and sisters, my job could only be done well if I understood more of the truth than them, and knew how to resolve the problems and difficulties they had. Before I even attended a gathering, I worried that if I couldn’t resolve my brothers’ and sisters’ problems, they’d look down on me. To avoid making a fool out of myself in front of them, I didn’t even dare attend any gatherings. I was deeply anguished and distressed. I put myself on a pedestal and couldn’t let go of my status. Reflecting on this, I realized that I was too preoccupied with my reputation and status. I was always trying to look good in front of everyone and as soon as I was in danger of having my weaknesses exposed and losing face, I would package and disguise myself. I took my promotion as a sign of status, not as a duty and responsibility. I wanted to use status to build myself up and win the admiration of my brothers and sisters. I was so lowly and shameful! So, I prayed to God in my heart, telling Him I was willing to rebel against these bad intentions and notions. Then, a passage of God’s word came to mind: **“When God requires that people fulfill their duty well, He is not asking them to complete a certain number of tasks**

or accomplish any great endeavors, nor to perform any great undertakings. What God wants is for people to be able to do all they can in a down-to-earth way, and live in accordance with His words. God does not need you to be great or noble, or bring about any miracles, nor does He want to see any pleasant surprises in you. He does not need such things. All God needs is for you to steadfastly practice according to His words. When you listen to God's words, do what you have understood, carry out what you have comprehended, remember well what you have heard, and then, when the time comes to practice, do so according to God's words. Let them become your life, your realities, and what you live out. Thus, God will be satisfied. ... Performing your duty isn't actually difficult, nor is it hard to do so loyally, and to an acceptable standard. You don't have to sacrifice your life or do anything special or difficult, you merely have to follow the words and instructions of God honestly and steadfastly, not adding your own ideas or running your own operation, but walking the path of pursuing the truth. If people can do this, they will basically have a human semblance. When they have true submission to God, and have become an honest person, they will possess the likeness of a true human being" (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. The Proper Fulfillment of Duty Requires Harmonious Cooperation). Through God's words, I saw that God doesn't ask that much of us—He doesn't demand a certain amount of work or accomplishments, or that we become some kind of omnipotent superhuman. He just wants us to be true created beings, practically doing our duties according to His demands. When the church arranged for me to be a team leader, it was not to let me chase after reputation and status, but to let me undertake a responsibility. I should practically pursue the truth in doing my duty. If I met with any difficulty, I should take it upon myself to

pray to God and rely on Him to find a path of resolution. In gatherings with brothers and sisters, I should only fellowship as much as I understand, and, if I was unclear on something, I should just be artless and open with them and seek a solution together. Only then could I gain God's guidance. Once I understood God's intention, I had the confidence to take on my duty. During gatherings with my brothers and sisters, I consciously prayed to God, didn't worry about face or status, and was able to be open about my corruption with my brothers and sisters. During discussions of the work, I could feel the enlightenment and guidance of the Holy Spirit and was able to discover some problems. I was also able to apply that guidance to real situations and make suggestions. I still had a lot of flaws and inadequacies, but I found some ways forward through discussion with everybody. I saw that if I had the right intention, stood in my right position, and did my duty in an honest and straightforward manner according to God's demands, it would be easier to gain His guidance.

Three months later, I was put in charge of a few more groups. The mere thought of fellowshiping for so many brothers and sisters to resolve problems at gatherings made me feel so nervous again. Each group had a different situation, and I'd never met any of the brothers and sisters in these groups and wasn't acquainted with their situations. If I went and wasn't able to resolve their problems or difficulties, would they look down on me and say I couldn't resolve real problems and wasn't cut out to be a team leader? To gain everyone's approval, I spent more time reading God's words to equip myself with truth, but when it came time for the gathering, I was still a nervous wreck. Early on, when I went to a group to attend a gathering, I was extremely anxious and all my facial muscles tightened up. I didn't want my brothers and sisters to notice, so I pretended that I was calmly looking up God's words on the computer, but in my heart I was

frantically praying to God, beseeching Him to help me calm down. I asked a few brothers and sisters about their states and difficulties, and after fellowshiping I realized that everyone had a different problem, and would need fellowship with different passages of God's words. This really threw me off—if I couldn't find appropriate words of God to resolve everyone's problems, it would be a very dull gathering. How awkward! The more nervous I became, the less clearly I could think. A lot of time went by and I still couldn't find an appropriate passage of God's words. Actually, I wanted to open up in fellowship with my brothers and sisters and search together, but I also worried that I'd make a fool out of myself if news got out that I, a team leader, couldn't resolve everyone's problems and difficulties. Thinking of these, I just couldn't get myself to open up and finally could only randomly select a few passages of God's words and forced myself to share some literal understanding that wasn't really relevant to my brothers' and sisters' states. The atmosphere at that time was terribly awkward. The gathering was a failure and ended like that. I returned from the gathering to hear my partnered sister excitedly fellowshiping about her takeaway from a different group gathering, but I was all frowns and felt so distressed I could barely catch a breath. The more I thought about it, the more I felt like I wasn't up to being a team leader, and I just wanted to give up on my duty. In utter misery, I prayed over and over again to God, "Dear God! I feel so miserable. I'm always so preoccupied with status and reputation, I don't know how I should do this duty, nor do I have the will to strive harder. I pray that You guide me to understand myself and extricate myself from this negative state."

In my seeking, I found a passage of God's words that exposes the nature essence of antichrists and was deeply moved. God's words say: **"For antichrists, status and reputation are their life. No matter how they**

live, no matter what environment they live in, no matter what work they do, no matter what they pursue, what their goals are, what their life's direction is, it all revolves around having a good reputation and a high status. And this aim does not change; they can never put aside such things. This is the true face of antichrists, and their essence. You could put them in a primeval forest deep in the mountains, and still they would not put aside their pursuit of reputation and status. You can put them among any group of people, and all they can think about is still reputation and status. Although antichrists also believe in God, they see the pursuit of reputation and status as equivalent to faith in God and give it equal weight. Which is to say, as they walk the path of faith in God, they also pursue their own reputation and status. It can be said that in antichrists' hearts, they believe that pursuit of the truth in their faith in God is the pursuit of reputation and status; the pursuit of reputation and status is also the pursuit of the truth, and to gain reputation and status is to gain the truth and life. If they feel that they have no reputation, gains, or status, that no one admires them, or esteems them, or follows them, then they are very disappointed, they believe there is no point in believing in God, no value to it, and they say to themselves, 'Is such faith in god a failure? Is it hopeless?' They often deliberate such things in their hearts, they deliberate how they can carve a place out for themselves in the house of God, how they can have a lofty reputation in the church, so that people listen when they talk, and support them when they act, and follow them wherever they go; so that they have the final say in the church, and fame, gain, and status—they really focus on such things in their hearts. These are what such people pursue'' (The Word, Vol. 4. Exposing Antichrists. Item Nine (Part Three)). I compared this with my own state and behavior and saw how obsessed I was

with reputation and status. I always wanted to make a name for myself and feel recognized. In doing my duty, I was only concerned with winning admiration and building up my own image. What I had shown was an antichrist's disposition. From the moment I was promoted to a team leader, I began thinking of myself as someone with status—I put myself on a pedestal and was worried anytime if I was called to go to a gathering and was so afraid that if I couldn't resolve real issues, I would lose the respect of my brothers and sisters as well as my status of being a team leader. When dealing with my brothers' and sisters' issues, I didn't know which passages of God's words to use to resolve them and I wasn't willing to open up and be honest, to seek and fellowship together. In order to safeguard my own status, I disguised myself, giving forced talk of words and doctrines to make things less awkward without considering if I had really resolved my brothers' and sisters' difficulties. And so the gatherings were all ineffective. I didn't reflect on myself when these issues came up, but even became negative and wanted to quit when I lost face. I was so lacking in humanity! Having realized all this, I felt so regretful and so I prayed to God in my heart and was willing to repent and transform.

Later, I also saw this passage of God's words: **“In sum, regardless of what the direction or target of your pursuit is, if you do not reflect on the pursuit of status and reputation, and if you find it very difficult to put these things aside, then they will affect your life entry. As long as status has a place in your heart, it will totally control and influence your life's direction and the goals you strive for, in which case it will be very difficult for you to enter the truth reality, to say nothing of achieving changes in your disposition; whether you are ultimately able to gain God's approval, of course, goes without saying. What's more, if you are never able to put aside your pursuit of status, this will affect**

your ability to adequately do your duty, which will make it very difficult for you to become an acceptable created being. Why do I say this? God loathes nothing more than when people pursue status, because the pursuit of status is a satanic disposition, it is a wrong path, it is born of the corruption of Satan, it is something condemned by God, and it is the very thing that God judges and purifies. God loathes nothing more than when people pursue status, and yet you still mulishly compete for status, you unfailingly cherish and protect it, always trying to take it for yourself. And in nature, is all of this not antagonistic to God? Status is not ordained for people by God; God provides people with the truth, the way, and the life, and ultimately makes them become an acceptable created being, a small and insignificant created being—not someone who has status and prestige and is revered by thousands of people. And so, no matter what perspective it is viewed from, the pursuit of status is a dead end” (The

Word, Vol. 4. Exposing Antichrists. Item Nine (Part Three)). The severity of God’s words made me very scared. I realized that nothing disgusts God more than people pursuing status. If one didn’t repent, it would eventually lead to personal harm and ruin. I had believed in God for many years, and had enjoyed so much of God’s grace and the watering and supplying of His words. Today God was gracious to me and gave me this burden, and allowed me to seek more truth principles through performing my duty so that I could understand the truth, and gain life entry. But I never considered how I should pursue the truth to repay God’s love. I only ever considered my own fame, gain and status. I was completely lacking in conscience and reason! In order to save deeply corrupted humanity, God was incarnated and came to this world, suffering untold humiliation. God is supreme and great, but He is never self-aggrandizing. He just quietly goes about expressing the

truth and judging and cleansing our corrupt dispositions, so that we can cast off our filth and gain His salvation. I saw how humble and lovable God is. I am just a miniscule created being, full of filth and corruption, and yet I was always trying to build up my image to get people's respect. I was so insufferably arrogant, conceited, and shameless. I also thought of Paul, who liked to preach and do work to earn the admiration and respect of others. In his many years of belief, he never sought to transform his disposition, only ever striving for status, rewards and crown. He even claimed that to him to live was Christ, and vainly attempted to take God's place in people's hearts. Paul was walking the God-resisting path of an antichrist and eventually offended God's disposition and was cast down by Him into hell to suffer eternal punishment. If I did not turn myself around, I would suffer the same fate as Paul. Once I was aware of these, I prayed to God to repent, asking that He guide me to find the right path of practice.

One day, I read a passage of God's words, which says: **“Letting go of reputation and status isn't easy—it depends on people pursuing the truth. Only by understanding the truth can one come to know oneself, see clearly the emptiness of seeking fame, gain and status, and see clearly the truth of mankind's corruption. Only when a person truly comes to know themselves can they abandon status and reputation. It's not easy to cast off one's corrupt disposition. If you have recognized that you lack the truth, are beset with deficiencies, and reveal too much corruption, yet you put no effort into pursuing the truth, and you disguise yourself and engage in hypocrisy, leading people to believe that you can do anything, then this will put you in danger—and sooner or later, there will come a time when you will hit a roadblock and fall. You must admit that you don't have the truth, and be brave enough to face reality. You have weaknesses, reveal corruption, and are beset with all**

manner of inadequacies. This is normal, because you're a regular person, you're not superhuman or omnipotent, and you must recognize that. When other people scorn or satirize you, don't immediately react with antipathy because what they say is unpleasant, or resist it because you believe yourself to be capable and perfect—this shouldn't be your attitude toward such words. What should your attitude be? You should say to yourself, 'I have my faults, everything about me is corrupt and flawed, and I'm simply an ordinary person. Their scorn and satirizing of me notwithstanding, is there any truth to it? If part of what they say is true, then I must accept it from God.' If you have this attitude, it is proof that you are capable of handling status, reputation, and what other people say about you correctly. ... When you have the constant thought and desire to compete for status, then you must realize what bad things this kind of state will lead to if left unsolved. So waste no time in searching for the truth, overcome your desire to compete for status while it is in the nascent stage, and replace it with practicing the truth. When you practice the truth, your desire and ambition to compete for status will be diminished, and you will not disturb the work of the church. In this way, your actions will be remembered and approved of by God" (The Word, Vol. 4. Exposing Antichrists. Item Nine (Part Three)).

Through reading God's words, I realized I'm just a person that's been corrupted by Satan, so it's normal that I have flaws and inadequacies. God has never demanded that I be the best worker, have excellent caliber and stature, or become a towering and perfect person. He just wishes for me to have a pure, honest heart, to earnestly pursue the truth and walk the path of fearing God and shunning evil. I also understood that in God's house there is no distinction between high and low status, and that church leaders and workers and team leaders were only established because they are necessary

for the work, but no matter what work we do, we're all just created beings doing our duties. Just because I was a team leader didn't necessarily mean that I had the truth reality, but I always demanded myself that I get to the bottom of every issue and resolve every problem. This was really impractical and resulted from my arrogance and me not understanding myself. The brothers and sisters and I should learn from each other and we should seek the truth together to resolve any problems and difficulties we encounter while doing our duties. If I didn't understand something, I shouldn't put on a false front or wrap myself up—I should bravely open up about my inadequacies and seek with my brothers and sisters. Only then could I do my duties even better.

Once, there were a few brothers and sisters living in negativity and I needed to gather and fellowship with them. At first I was a little nervous. I worried about what they'd think of me if I didn't fellowship well, and so I wanted to equip myself ahead of time at home by finding relevant passages of God's words, thinking that this way, I could handle their problems more easily during the gathering and win everyone's respect. Then I realized that I had the wrong intention in doing my duty. I only wanted to resolve all of my brothers' and sisters' problems so that I could earn their admiration and respect—I was still working for reputation and status. So I prayed to God in my heart, asking Him to help me rebel against my incorrect intentions. I read a passage of God's words that said: **“For the Holy Spirit to work within a person and transform their various negative states, that person must actively cooperate and seek, at times suffering, paying a price, renouncing things, and rebelling against the flesh, reversing their course step-by-step. It takes a long time for this to get results, and for them to set foot on the right path—but it only takes seconds for God to reveal someone. If you do not perform your duty well, but always try to**

distinguish yourself, and always try to compete for status, to stand out and shine, fighting for your reputation and interests, then while living in this state, are you not just a laborer? You can labor if you want to, but it is possible that you will be revealed before your laboring is done. When people are revealed, their day of being condemned and eliminated arrives. Is it possible to reverse that outcome? It is not easy; it could be that God has already determined their outcome, in which case, they are in trouble” (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. Freedom and Liberation Can Be Gained Only by Casting Off One’s Corrupt Disposition).

While reflecting on God’s words, I realized that if my intention was to use gatherings and fellowship to show off myself and garner admiration, and not to resolve the problems and difficulties of my brothers and sisters, then I was still walking a God-resisting path. Even if I attended a gathering, I wouldn’t have God’s enlightenment or guidance and the gathering would be ineffective. Realizing this, I prayed to God in my heart and corrected my intention. When it was time to share during the gathering, I fellowshiped with brothers and sisters based on the relevant words of God. I no longer disguised myself and only fellowshiped on what I understood, and my brothers and sisters also discussed their understanding. Together, we found a path of practice through our fellowship and our states improved. I felt very relaxed. I saw how by letting go of my concern for status and reputation and doing my duties in one accord with my brothers and sisters, I could gain God’s guidance.

Through experiencing the judgment and revelation of God’s words during that period of time, I’ve finally begun to know myself and my intention and attitude in doing my duty have undergone some changes. I now clearly see that chasing after reputation, status and the respect and admiration of others has no meaning or value—it only brings harm. Only

focusing on practicing the truth, seeking dispositional change, and doing one's duty in a way that is up to standard to satisfy God are proper pursuits.

69. After Mom Was Diagnosed With Cancer

By Yang Chen, China

In June 2023, I was supposed to leave home to do my duty due to the needs of the gospel work. Because I knew I wouldn't be able to come back for a while, I thought I'd go home, let my parents know, and pick up some clothes in the process. When I arrived, I saw my mom with a tube inserted in her arm and looking quite pallid. I asked her what was wrong with her, and she said it was nothing big and would get better with a small surgery. But it seemed like something more serious, so I asked to see her medical records. The records noted she had three kinds of malignant tumors. I was shocked, my mother had cancer! These were malignant tumors—could she really recover? What if the treatment didn't work? My father said to me, “Your mother is undergoing chemotherapy now and the success of her treatment will depend on how the chemotherapy goes.” I knew that this was all with God's permission and I couldn't complain, so I prayed to God to protect my heart. My dad then proceeded to tell me how when my mother was sick in the hospital, my little brother had been there to care for her and had even taken on another job to make money for my mom's medical bills. I was quite upset after hearing that. I was the eldest child in the family, and I should have been the one handling all this, but instead I was unable to offer any help at all. Would my parents think I lacked conscience, was unfilial and that they had raised me for nothing? My mother comforted me, saying, “Don't you worry and don't be afraid. How long we live is all up to God. Just focus on what you need to do, and don't worry about me.” Hearing my mom say that, I really wanted to stay behind and take care of her, but there was so much work to do in the church and I knew I couldn't stay at home for much longer. Seeing my mom like that, I just couldn't get

myself to say I planned to go do my duty away from home, so I ultimately just left in a rush without saying anything.

On the road, all I could think about was my mom sick at the hospital with no one to take care of her and my little brother working hard to pay for my mom's medical bills. The more I thought about it, the worse I felt. I felt that as her daughter, I should be there to take care of her when she was sick, but not only was I not able to take care of her, I wasn't able to help at all. If other people heard about this, what would they say about me? Would they say I lacked a conscience and was ungrateful? Would my little brother complain about me? The more I thought, the worse I felt, and I totally lost the resolve to leave home and do my duty. In my heart, I said to God, "Oh God, I cannot leave home to do my duty. My mother has cancer, and if I leave now, I might never get to see her again! I'll just do my duty here, that way I can go see my mom when I have free time." After that, I still did my duty, but I couldn't quiet my mind. I kept thinking, "How is my mom doing now?" I wanted to find time to go home and see her. I knew my state was off, so I looked for words of God to read. I found this passage: **"In every period and at every stage, some particular things happen in the church that are at odds with people's notions. For example, some people get sick, leaders and workers get replaced, some people are exposed and eliminated, some face the test of life and death, some churches even have evil people and antichrists who cause disturbances, and so on. These things happen from time to time, but they are by no means accidental. All of these things are the result of God's sovereignty and arrangements. A very peaceful period may suddenly be interrupted by several incidents or unusual events, which happen either around you, or to you personally, and the occurrence of these things breaks the normal order and normality of people's lives. From the outside, these**

things don't conform to people's notions and imaginings, they are things that people don't want to happen to them or to witness. So does the occurrence of these things benefit people? ... Nothing happens by chance, everything is ruled over by God. Although people can understand and accept this in theory, how should people treat God's sovereignty? This is the truth that people should pursue and understand, and they should specifically practice it. If people only acknowledge the sovereignty of God in theory, but do not have a real understanding of it, and their own notions and imaginings have not been resolved, then no matter for how many years they believe in God and how many things they experience, they will still not be able to gain the truth in the end" (The Word, Vol. 6. On the Pursuit of the Truth I. What It Means to Pursue the Truth (11)). Through God's words, I realized that people will face difficult circumstances at different phases of their lives. People might not want to face such circumstances, but God's intention is within them. If we do not seek the truth, live within our notions and imaginings, and misunderstand and complain about God, it will be difficult to learn lessons from these situations. There were lessons I could learn from my mom falling ill. I had to seek the truth and reflect on myself. I reflected on how when I heard my mom got cancer, I was worried that the treatment wouldn't work. I also worried that if I didn't care for her while she was receiving chemo at the hospital, she would be upset. Would she think she had raised me in vain? Due to this worry, I immediately lost all resolve to leave home to do my duty. I even reasoned with God in my heart. I felt that I had to stay back and care for my mom now that she was ill, and couldn't leave home to do my duty. My affections ran too deep, and I had to seek the truth to resolve it.

Later on, I looked for relevant passages of God's words to read. Almighty God says: **"There is a saying in the world of nonbelievers: 'Crows repay their mothers by feeding them, and lambs kneel to receive milk from their mothers.'** There's also this saying: **'An unfilial person is lower than a beast.'** How grandiose these sayings sound! Actually, the phenomena that the first saying mentions, crows repaying their mothers by feeding them, and lambs kneeling to receive milk from their mothers, really do exist, these are facts. However, they are simply phenomena within the animal world. They are merely a kind of law that God has established for various living creatures, and by which all kinds of living creatures, including humans, abide. ... Why do people say such things? Because in society and within groups of people, there are various incorrect ideas and consensuses. After people have been influenced, corroded, and rotted by these things, different ways of interpreting and dealing with the parent-child relationship arise within them, and they ultimately treat their parents as their creditors—creditors that they will never be able to repay their whole lives. There are even some people who feel guilty for their whole lives after their parents die, and think themselves unworthy of their parents' kindness, because of one thing they did that didn't make their parents happy or didn't go the way their parents wanted it to. Tell Me, is this not excessive? People live amid their feelings, so they can only be encroached upon and disturbed by various ideas stemming from these feelings. People live in an environment that is colored by the ideology of corrupt mankind, so they are encroached upon and disturbed by various fallacious ideas, which makes their lives exhausting and less simple than those of other living creatures. However, right now, because God is working, and because He is expressing the truth to tell

people the true nature of all these facts, and to enable them to understand the truth, after you come to understand the truth, these fallacious ideas and views will no longer burden you, and they will no longer serve as a guide for how you handle your relationship with your parents. At this point, your life will become more relaxed. Living a relaxed life does not mean that you will not know what your responsibilities and obligations are—you will still know these things. It just depends on which perspective and methods you choose to approach your responsibilities and obligations with. One path is to take the route of feelings, and to deal with these things based on emotional means, and the methods, ideas, and views that Satan guides man toward. The other path is to deal with these things based on the words that God has taught man. When people handle these matters according to Satan's fallacious ideas and views, they can only live within the entanglements of their feelings, and they are never able to distinguish right from wrong. Under these circumstances, they have no choice but to live in a snare, always tangled up with matters such as, 'You're right, I'm wrong. You've given me more; I've given you less. You're ungrateful. You're out of line.' Consequently, there is never a time when they speak clearly. However, after people understand the truth, and when they escape from their fallacious ideas and views, and from the web of feelings, these matters become simple to them. If you abide by a truth principle, idea, or view that is correct and comes from God, your life will become very relaxed. Neither public opinion, nor the awareness of your conscience, nor the burden of your feelings will impede how you handle your relationship with your parents anymore; by contrast, these things will enable you to face this relationship in a correct and rational way. If you act according to the truth principles

that God has given man, even if people criticize you behind your back, you will still feel peace and calm in the depths of your heart, and it will have no effect on you. At the very least, you will not berate yourself for being an uncaring ingrate or feel the accusation of your conscience anymore in the depths of your heart. This is because you will know that all of your actions are carried out in accordance with the methods that God has taught you, and that you are listening to and submitting to God's words, and following His way. Listening to God's words and following His way is the sense of conscience that people ought to possess most of all. You will only be a true person when you can do these things. If you have not accomplished these things, then you are an uncaring ingrate. Isn't that the case? (It is.)" (The Word, Vol. 6. On the Pursuit of the Truth I. How to Pursue the Truth (17)). Through God's words, I realized that the reason I was so miserable was because fallacious views like "Filial piety is a virtue to be held above all else" and "An unfilial person is lower than a beast," with which Satan had inculcated me, had become deeply rooted in my mind. I felt that if I couldn't be filial to my parents, that meant I was an ungrateful, unfilial daughter. I felt that it must have been difficult to raise me, especially given that I was born in an age where boys and men were deemed superior, which meant my mom suffered a lot of humiliation and scorn because I was a girl, but she loved me more than my little brother. She was also especially supportive of my faith and duty. She knew I had deep affections, so if something happened at home, she wouldn't tell me for fear of distracting me and impacting my duty. Be it from an emotional or financial perspective, my mom gave me a lot of support and would often encourage me to do my duty properly. Thinking of all this and how I couldn't be by her side to care for her when she was sick, I felt really upset. I always thought that as their daughter, if I didn't honor them or didn't care

for them when they were sick, this was unfilial, ungrateful behavior. So I felt guilty and ashamed to face them. I had been deeply influenced by satanic poisons! If I continued to treat this through the lens of affection and traditional views, I would have to shoulder this ideological baggage, thinking that I was unfilial for not taking care of my mom. This would be a very tiring and miserable way to live. I had to actively forsake all this and learn to view people and things according to the truth in God's words, only then could I rid myself of this suffering.

Later on, during devotionals, I came across this passage of God's words. It gave me more clarity about how to treat my relationship with my parents. God's words say: **"As a child, you should understand that your parents are not your creditors. There are many things that you must do in this life, and these are all things that a created being ought to do, that have been entrusted to you by the Lord of creation, and they have nothing to do with you repaying your parents' kindness. Showing filial piety to your parents, repaying them, returning their kindness—these things have nothing to do with your mission in life. It can also be said that it is not necessary for you to show filial piety to your parents, to repay them, or to fulfill any of your responsibilities to them. To put it plainly, you can do a bit of this and fulfill a bit of your responsibilities when your circumstances allow; when they do not, you do not need to insist upon doing so. If you cannot fulfill your responsibility to show filial piety to your parents, this is not a terrible thing, it just goes against your conscience, human morality, and human notions a little. But at the very least, it does not go against the truth, and God will not condemn you for it. When you understand the truth, your conscience will not feel rebuked on account of this. Do your hearts not feel steady now that you have understood this aspect of the truth? (Yes.) Some**

people say: 'Though God won't condemn me, in my conscience, I still can't get past this, and I feel unsteady.' If this is the case for you, then your stature is too small, and you have not understood or seen through to the essence of this matter. You do not understand man's destiny, you do not understand God's sovereignty, and you are not willing to accept God's sovereignty and arrangements. You always possess human will and your own feelings, and these things are driving and dominating you; they have become your life. If you choose human will and your feelings, then you have not chosen the truth, and you are not practicing the truth or submitting to it. If you choose human will and your feelings, then you are betraying the truth. Your circumstances and environment clearly do not permit you to show filial piety to your parents, but you always think: 'I owe a debt to my parents. I haven't shown them filial piety. They haven't seen me for so many years. They raised me for nothing.' In the depths of your heart, you are never able to let go of these things. This proves one thing: You do not accept the truth. In terms of doctrine, you acknowledge that God's words are correct, but you do not accept them as the truth, or take them as the principles of your actions. So, at the very least, when it comes to the matter of how you treat your parents, you are not a person who pursues the truth. This is because, in this matter, you do not act based on the truth, you do not practice according to God's words, instead you just satisfy your emotional needs, and the needs of your conscience, wanting to show filial piety to your parents and repay their kindness. Although God does not condemn you for making this choice, and it is your choice, in the end the one who will lose out, particularly in terms of the life, is you" (The Word, Vol. 6. On the Pursuit of the Truth I. How to Pursue the Truth (17)). After reading God's words I felt much brighter. I saw that the way my

parents had raised me was all due to God's sovereignty and arrangements. My mom's kind treatment was really God's grace. After entering the faith, my mom gave me a lot of support so that I could do my duty in peace. This might have outwardly seemed like my mom's kindness, but in actuality, it was because God knew my stature and made arrangements according to my needs. It was my mom's duty and responsibility to support me in my faith. God says that our parents are not our creditors, and that being filial to our parents is just a responsibility and obligation, not our mission as people. If the conditions are right, we can care for them and show filial piety to them, but if not and we can't, it is not a disgrace, because there are many things we must do in this life. We have duties that we should do as created beings, and we cannot live just to show filial piety to our parents. There are also many nonbelievers who spend lots of time away from their parents due to their careers and family and are unable to care for their parents, but people understand and don't condemn or mock them. As for me, I became mired in my thankfulness to my parents, and would often feel upset and guilty about not being able to be with them to care for them and would even opt not to leave home to do my duty. My affections were just too strong! We were in a moment where the gospel was greatly expanding, and as a church leader I ought to have been even more considerate of God's intention. I should lead my brothers and sisters to bear witness to God's gospel of the last days and allow even more people to hear God's voice and receive His salvation in the last days. This was my duty and my responsibility. But instead, I believed that caring for and honoring my parents was the most important thing I could do. I had been a believer for years and ate and drank so much of God's words, but when faced with an actual situation, I was unable to submit to God's orchestrations and arrangements, fulfill my duty, or handle the situation using the truth principles. I was betraying and failing to accept

the truth! I realized that if I continued to live by these traditional thoughts and views and didn't repent to God and fulfill my duty, I would ultimately be revealed and eliminated. I prayed to God in my heart, "Oh God! My mom's illness has thoroughly revealed my disbelieving viewpoints. I see now that my stature is quite small and I lack the truth reality. I now understand that showing filial piety to my parents is not my mission. Fulfilling my duty as a created being is my true mission and responsibility. I am willing to forsake my fallacious views and put my mom's illness in Your hands. No matter what happens, I will keep to my duty and not become Satan's laughingstock." After prayer, I felt much more at ease and was willing to rely upon God to fulfill my given duty.

After a while, I consulted with a Chinese medical doctor about my mom and asked him to treat her. The doctor said, "The cancer has already metastasized all over her body and cannot be cured. All I can do is prescribe her half a month of herbs and see how it goes." When I saw the conclusion he'd reached, my heart just dropped. I thought about how before when I came home and saw my mom coughing, I never took her to the hospital and just got her some Chinese herbs and left it at that. If I had taken her to the hospital sooner and gotten her treatment more quickly, would things have turned out this way? The more I thought, the more upset and guilty I felt, and I became very despondent. So, I prayed to God asking Him to guide me out of that state. Later on, I read this passage of God's words: **"So, what is going on when your parents encounter these significant matters? It can only be said that God has orchestrated this kind of matter in their lives. It has been orchestrated by God's hand—you cannot focus on objective reasons and causes—your parents were supposed to encounter this matter when they reached this age, they were supposed to be struck with this illness. Could they have avoided it if you had been there? If**

God had not arranged for them to fall ill as part of their fates, then nothing would have happened to them, even if you hadn't been with them. If they were destined to encounter this kind of great misfortune in their lives, what effect could you have had if you'd been by their side? They still wouldn't have been able to avoid it, right? (Right.) Think about those people who don't believe in God—aren't their families all together, year after year? When those parents encounter great misfortune, the members of their extended family and their children are all with them, right? When parents fall ill, or when their illnesses worsen, is it because their children left them? That's not the case, it is fated to happen. It's just that, as their child, because you have this blood tie with your parents, you will feel upset when you hear that they are sick, while other people won't feel anything. This is very normal. However, your parents encountering this kind of great misfortune doesn't mean that you need to analyze and investigate, or ponder on how to get rid of it or resolve it. Your parents are adults; they have encountered this more than a few times in society. If God arranges an environment to rid them of this matter, then, sooner or later, it will vanish completely. If this matter is a life hurdle for them, and they must experience it, then it is up to God how long they must experience it for. It is something that they must experience, and they cannot avoid it. If you wish to single-handedly resolve this matter, to analyze and investigate the source, causes, and consequences of this matter, that is a foolish thought. It is of no use, and it is superfluous. You should not act in this way, analyzing, investigating, and contacting your classmates and friends for help, contacting the hospital for your parents, contacting the best doctors, arranging for the best hospital bed for them—you do not need to rack your brain doing all of these things.

If you really do have some excess energy, then you should do a good job at the duty you're supposed to perform now. Your parents have their own fates. No one can escape the age at which they are supposed to die. Your parents are not the masters of your fate, and in the same way, you are not the master of your parents' fates. If something is fated to happen to them, what can you do about it? What effect can you being anxious and looking for solutions achieve? It cannot achieve anything; it depends on God's intentions. If God wants to take them away, and enable you to perform your duty undisturbed, can you interfere with this? Can you discuss conditions with God? What should you do at this time? Racking your brain coming up with solutions, investigating, analyzing, putting the blame on yourself, and feeling ashamed to face your parents—are these the thoughts and actions that a person ought to have? These are all manifestations of a lack of submission to God and the truth; they are irrational, unwise, and rebellious toward God. People should not have these manifestations. Do you understand?

(Yes.)” (The Word, Vol. 6. On the Pursuit of the Truth I. How to Pursue the Truth (17)).

Through God's words I realized that God dictates and orchestrates what hardships people will face and how much suffering they undergo based on their needs and stature. As for when people will face certain situations and how long they must endure them, this is all presided over and arranged by God. None of this can be decided by mankind, much less should these things be analyzed from a mere human perspective. People must learn to accept from God and submit to God's arrangements and orchestrations. Take my mom's illness, superficially, it might have seemed like her condition worsened because she wasn't taken to the hospital soon enough, but actually this was just her fate. Man's life and death are all in God's hands. If God does not permit it, even large-scale catastrophes will bring no

harm to people. For instance, my dad got in a bad car accident and all other passengers were badly injured but he came away with light injuries and recovered the fastest. In our lives, we are carrying out our missions. If someone has completed their mission in life, they will depart from this world in the way according to God's plans. If they haven't completed their mission, then no matter what hardship they face, they will make it through safely. My mother's illness was quite advanced and the doctor said she was beyond recovery, but how long she would live was not for any mere person to determine, it would be decided and arranged by God. The reason I was so miserable was because I had extravagant desires and demands of God and always wanted my mom to recover. As soon as things didn't go my way, I became negative and miserable. This was all because I didn't know God's sovereignty and couldn't submit to God. After understanding God's intention, I prayed to Him, "Oh God! It is not for me to decide how my mom's recovery will fare or how long she will live. I should put aside my own demands and I'm willing to submit no matter what." After prayer, I felt calm and tranquil. I then read this passage of the Lord Jesus' words: **"If any man come to Me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brothers, and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple"** (Luke 14:26). Almighty God says: **"If your love for your parents exceeds your love for God, then you are unworthy of following God, and you are not one of His followers. If you are not one of His followers, then it can be said that you are not an overcomer, and God does not want you"** (The Word, Vol. 6. On the Pursuit of the Truth I. How to Pursue the Truth (17)). God said that those who love their parents more than Him are not fit to be His followers. I had to stop living by these fallacious views Satan had instilled in me. I had to start living differently, view people and things, and comport myself and act according to God's words and the truth principles.

Now I've gradually started applying myself to my duty. I still sometimes worry about my mom, but then I think that in her life, the situations she encounters and the suffering she must go through are all predetermined and orchestrated by God. It is all up to God how long my mom will live and how she will depart, it is not for me to determine. As I've realized this, I've become more at ease. Recently, I learned that my mom's condition is now stable and that she has learned some lessons through this illness. Hearing this news, I felt so deeply moved and also felt ashamed for my lack of faith in God. I recently proactively applied to do duties away from home.

Through this experience, I have gained an understanding of my fatal weakness and gained discernment of the fallacious views I've always held. I won't live by these views anymore and can properly treat my relationship with my parents. This is all due to God's guidance.

70. Why I Fear Exposing Others' Problems

By Rosemary, Taiwan

When I was at school, I noticed that some of my classmates were pretty outspoken. When they saw others were wrong, they'd just come out and say so, which would often offend people and get themselves ostracized. I thought: "Aren't these people a little bit dense? As the sayings go, 'Keeping silent on the faults of good friends makes for a long and good friendship,' and 'If you strike others, don't strike them in the face; if you call others out, don't call out their shortcomings.' See everything, but don't broach everything, this way, a person can fit in with the crowd. If you're too direct, even if you have no bad intentions, people will dislike and reject you. How can you make friends that way?" So I'd never directly point out others' problems when interacting with them. My classmates all liked to be friends with me, saying I was easy to get along with and nice, and I thought I had pretty good humanity. Once I had faith in God, I interacted with the brothers and sisters this way too. I didn't point out others' issues when I noticed them. I always felt being too direct would make people uncomfortable, that they'd think I was targeting them and trying to deliberately expose their shortcomings, and that this would destroy our relationship. It wasn't until I experienced being revealed and read God's word that I saw the way I interacted with others was against the truth and resistant to God.

It was 2015, and I was partnered with Leslie on video work. She'd been in the faith longer than me and was also older than me. We were polite toward each other, got along pretty well, and had almost no conflict. Later on, I was elected supervisor. One time, the others reported that Leslie was being perfunctory, devious, and slippery in her duty, and that she was

holding up work. I felt that her problem was pretty serious, so I spoke with my partnered sisters about needing to point out and expose Leslie's problems so that she could reflect, know herself, repent, and change. My sisters agreed and asked who should go fellowship with Leslie. I stood there saying nothing, not wanting to stick my neck out to resolve the problem. I thought: "If I point out her problems, will she think I'm intentionally targeting her? How would we get along after that?" To my surprise, everyone suggested that I go fellowship with Leslie. I really wanted to run away, but I knew that if I didn't point out her problems, church work would keep being impacted. So in the end, I just had to grit my teeth and go do it. At the time, I took some time to build myself up mentally, encouraging myself to point out her problems. I kept rehearsing what I was going to say to her in my head, from start to finish. But when I saw her, I felt like I had butterflies in my stomach. I felt like I was being choked, and I just couldn't get the words out. So I asked her in a gentle tone, "Has your state been good lately? Have you had any difficulties? Why have you been so slow in making videos?" Leslie responded that she'd been worried about her son not going to school, so her work was delayed. I thought: "She says she's having difficulties. If I expose her for being perfunctory, devious, and slippery in her duty, will she think I'm being too harsh and that I'm targeting her? If our relationship falls apart, it'll be a lot more uncomfortable between us." At that thought, I didn't point out her problems. I just gave her a few words of comfort and briefly went over the state of her duty.

Since she didn't have any real self-knowledge, she kept being perfunctory in her duty, and there were lots of problems in her videos. I realized Leslie's problems were pretty serious, and she'd have to be dismissed if she didn't make changes. Therefore, I went to fellowship with

her again. I thought that this time I would definitely point out her problems. But as soon as I sat down, the words were stuck in my mouth again. I kept thinking of how to tell her in a way that wouldn't make her uncomfortable while still making her aware of her problems, without having her develop a bias against me and think I was targeting her. After considering for a while, I asked her tactfully, "Why are you always perfunctory in your duty?" Leslie then told me that sometimes she gave in to her fleshly fondness for reading novels, and neglected her duty. She got so upset she burst into tears as she said this. I thought: "She's having such a hard time. If I expose that she's being devious and slippery in her duty, will she be able to take it? Best to say nothing. In any case, she's admitted her problem and should improve a bit in the future." So I expressed understanding toward her state and even encouraged her to put more effort into her duty. After that, she remained unrepentant, her perfunctory approach became worse and worse, and she ended up being dismissed. When this happened, I didn't reflect on what lessons I should learn.

Later on, I read a passage of God's word which gave me some understanding of my state. Almighty God says: **"People's conduct and ways of dealing with the world must be based on the words of God; this is the most basic principle for human conduct. How can people practice the truth if they do not understand the principles of human conduct? Practicing the truth is not about saying empty words or shouting slogans. Rather it is about how, no matter what people encounter in life, as long as it involves the principles of human conduct, their perspectives on things, or the matter of performing their duties, they are faced with making a choice, and they should seek the truth, search for a basis and principles in God's words, and then find a path of practice. Those who can practice in this way are people who pursue the**

truth. To be able to pursue the truth in this way no matter how great the difficulties one encounters is to walk the path of Peter, the path of pursuing the truth. For example: What principle should be followed when it comes to interacting with others? Perhaps your original viewpoint is that ‘Harmony is a treasure; forbearance is brilliance,’ and that you should keep on everyone’s good side, avoid causing others to lose face, and offend no one, thereby achieving good relations with others. Constricted by this viewpoint, you keep silent when you witness others doing bad things or violating the principles. You would rather that the work of the church suffers losses than offend anyone. You seek to stay on everyone’s good side, no matter who they are. You think only about human sentiments and saving face when you speak, and you always speak nice-sounding words to please others. Even if you discover that someone has problems, you choose to tolerate them, and just talk about them behind their back, but to their face you keep the peace and maintain your relationship. What do you think of such conduct? Is it not that of a people pleaser? Is it not pretty slippery? It violates the principles of human conduct. Is it not lowly to conduct yourself in such a manner? Those who act like this are not good people, this is not a noble way to conduct oneself. No matter how much you have suffered, and no matter how many prices you have paid, if you conduct yourself without principles, then you have failed in this respect, and your conduct will not be recognized, remembered, or **accepted before God**” (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. To Perform One’s Duty Well, One Must at Least Be Possessed of a Conscience and Reason). God’s words made it clear to me that no matter what happens in my life, as long as it involves principles of conduct or outlooks on things, I should always seek the truth principles. All along, I hadn’t dared to point out brothers’ and

sisters' problems, and I thought there was nothing wrong with that. I thought as long as we were getting along well and not arguing, all was good. I read that God says: **“No matter how much you have suffered, and no matter how many prices you have paid, if you conduct yourself without principles, then you have failed in this respect, and your conduct will not be recognized, remembered, or accepted before God.”**

These words really moved me. It may have seemed like I wasn't doing anything evil on the outside, but I was always afraid of offending people and never dared to honestly point out others' problems. Even if I saw a problem, I would just be angry inside, but still be all smiles with them, resulting in problems being unresolved that should have been solved, and church work suffering losses. God says that kind of person is sly, and unprincipled in their conduct. I reflected on how I'd handled the incident with Leslie. I was well aware that she was being devious and slippery in her duty and badly impacting progress, but I was scared of making her unhappy if I was too direct. She might think I was too harsh, and develop a bias against me. I was also afraid she'd not accept it and pull a long face, which would make things awkward between us in the future. Wanting to protect our relationship, I was too scared to say anything to expose or prune her. I saw her problem of being perfunctory becoming worse and I was angry, but in fellowship with her, I was scared of antagonizing her, so I didn't dare mention or expose her problem. I just said a few harmless things that skimmed over the topic, and even comforted her, despite how I felt. As a supervisor, not exposing or resolving the problems I found meant I was being irresponsible and seriously negligent. I'd been playing the “nice guy” around others all along, thinking that being considerate and understanding was being a good person. It was only when the facts were revealed that I fully changed how I viewed myself. I noticed Leslie's problem but did not

point it out and help her. As a result, she could not see the essence or consequences of her issue, her life suffered, and the church's work was delayed. I'd been so selfish, despicable, slippery, and deceitful. How could I say I had good humanity?

In a gathering, I read God's word's dissection of "If you strike others, don't strike them in the face; if you call others out, don't call out their shortcomings," and "Keeping silent on the faults of good friends makes for a long and good friendship." I then knew that I'd been unwilling to point out others' problems because I'd been influenced by these ideas. Almighty God says: **"There is a tenet in philosophies for worldly dealings that says, 'Keeping silent on the faults of good friends makes for a long and good friendship.' It means that in order to preserve a friendly relationship, one must keep silent about their friend's problems, even if they see them clearly—that they should abide by the principles of not striking people in the face or calling out their shortcomings. They are to deceive each other, hide from each other, engage in intrigue with each other; and though they know with crystal clarity what sort of person the other is, they do not say it outright, but employ cunning methods to preserve their friendly relationship. Why would one want to preserve such relationships? It is about not wanting to make enemies in this society, within one's group, which would mean subjecting oneself often to dangerous situations. Knowing someone will become your enemy and harm you after you have called out their shortcomings or hurt them, and not wishing to put yourself in such a situation, you employ the tenet of philosophies for worldly dealings that runs, 'If you strike others, don't strike them in the face; if you call others out, don't call out their shortcomings.' In light of this, if two people are in such a relationship, do they count as true friends? (No.) They are not true**

friends, much less each other's confidant. So, what sort of relationship is this, exactly? Is it not a fundamental social relationship? (It is.) In such social relationships, people cannot offer their feelings, nor have deep exchanges, nor speak about whatever they wish. They cannot say out loud what is in their heart, or the problems they see in the other, or words that would benefit the other. Instead, they pick nice things to say, to keep the other's favor. They dare not speak the truth or uphold the principles, lest it give rise to animosity toward them in others. When no one is threatening to someone, does that person not live in relative ease and peace? Is this not people's goal in promoting the saying, 'If you strike others, don't strike them in the face; if you call others out, don't call out their shortcomings'? (It is.) Clearly, this is a cunning, deceptive way of existence with an element of defensiveness, whose goal is self-preservation. People who live like this have no confidants, no close friends with whom they can say whatever they like. They are defensive with each other, and calculating, and strategic, each taking what they need from the relationship. Is this not so? At its root, the goal of 'If you strike others, don't strike them in the face; if you call others out, don't call out their shortcomings' is to keep from offending others and making enemies, to protect oneself by not causing hurt to anyone. It is a technique and method one adopts to keep themselves from being hurt. Looking at these several facets of its essence, is the demand of people's moral conduct 'If you strike others, don't strike them in the face; if you call others out, don't call out their shortcomings' a noble one? Is it a positive one? (No.) Then, what does it teach people? That you must not upset or hurt anyone, otherwise, you are the one who will end up getting hurt; and also, that you should not trust anyone. If you hurt any one of your good friends, the friendship will quietly start to change:

They will go from being your good, close friend to a stranger or an enemy. What problems can it resolve, teaching people to act so? Even if, by acting in this way, you do not make enemies and even lose a few, will this make people admire and approve of you, and always keep you as a friend? Does this fully achieve the standard for moral conduct? At the very best, this is no more than a philosophy for worldly dealings”

(The Word, Vol. 6. On the Pursuit of the Truth I. What It Means to Pursue the Truth (8)). When God dissected the impact of the philosophies for worldly dealings, “If you strike others, don’t strike them in the face; if you call others out, don’t call out their shortcomings,” and “Keeping silent on the faults of good friends makes for a long and good friendship,” I felt like He was right in front of me, exposing me. Living by these philosophies, my words and actions only served to protect me. No matter who I found myself with, I always held to the principle of never antagonizing or offending anyone. When I was in school, I saw people who were blunt being ostracized, so I thought that to get along with others, you must never say how you really felt, and even if you see their problems, you must never bring them up and offend them. That way, people would like you and you would fit in easily. Even after believing in God, I still followed those philosophies when interacting with brothers and sisters. To avoid being disliked or hurting feelings, when it came to exposing or doing anything that might offend others, I’d take a back seat or mention it to my partnered brothers and sisters to let them handle it. Sometimes when I had to give fellowship, I’d just say some inconsequential things that fit the situation, meaning a lot of problems didn’t get resolved in time. I held the philosophies for worldly dealings, like “One more friend means one more path; one more enemy means one more obstacle” and “Keeping silent on the faults of good friends makes for a long and good friendship,” to be the criteria for conducting myself. I never told

anyone what I was really thinking, and I became more and more hypocritical and deceitful. I'd think to myself that maintaining good relations and getting along with everyone would make people like me, then I'd easily gain others' approval. If one day I said or did something against principles, people would let me off the hook and allow me to save face. I saw that I was unprincipled in my interactions. I just wanted to keep everyone happy and smiling, and for nobody to expose anyone's shortcomings so I would never lose face and could maintain my status and image. Wasn't I trying to win people over and use them? I might have seemed personable, affable, and empathetic, but behind it all, I was pursuing my own unspoken ends. I was truly evil! Thinking back on the matter of Leslie, it was clear to me that she was devious and slippery in her duty, but to avoid antagonizing her, I didn't point out or expose her problems, impacting work progress. Not only was I harming her by interacting that way, but I was also delaying church work. God has always fellowshiped that we should view people and things, and behave and act according to God's words, with the truth as our criterion. But in everyday life, I was living by satanic philosophies, always constrained in my speech and actions. I was unable to fellowship or help others normally, and even less able to fulfill the responsibilities of a leader. I didn't consider how to speak in a way that would edify others or how to protect the church's work. I even watched as the church's work was harmed and played the nice guy despite my feelings. I was sacrificing the church's interests for the sake of my own. I was so hypocritical and lacking in humanity! If I went on like that, I'd be hated and detested by God and disdained and rejected by others. I prayed to God, "Oh God, I see the church's work being harmed but I always play the nice guy. I'm not protecting the church's interests and that must disgust You so much. Oh God, I want to repent. Please guide me to

resolve this problem of mine. I want to be a person with a sense of justice that protects the church's work.”

During my spiritual devotion, I read more of God's word: **“When something befalls you, you live by philosophies for worldly dealings, and do not practice the truth. You are always afraid of offending others, but not of offending God, and will even sacrifice the interests of God's house to protect your interpersonal relationships. What are the consequences of acting in this way? You will have protected your interpersonal relationships quite well, but you will have offended God, and He will spurn you, and be angry with you. Which is better, on balance? If you cannot tell, then you are completely muddled; it proves that you do not have the slightest understanding of the truth. If you go on like that without ever waking up to it, the danger is great indeed, and if you are unable to attain the truth in the end, it will be you who has suffered a loss. If you do not seek the truth in this matter, and you fail, will you be able to seek the truth in the future? If you still cannot, it will no longer be an issue of suffering a loss—you will ultimately be eliminated. If you have the motivations and perspective of a people pleaser, then, in all matters, you will be incapable of practicing the truth and abiding by principle, and you will always fail and fall down. If you do not awaken and do not ever seek the truth, then you are a disbeliever, and you will never gain the truth and life. What, then, should you do? When faced with such things, you must pray to God and call out to Him, begging for salvation and asking that He give you more faith and strength and enable you to abide by the principles, do what you should do, handle things according to the principles, stand firm in the position you should stand in, protect the interests of God's house, and prevent any harm from coming to the work of God's house.**

If you are able to rebel against your self-interests, your pride, and your standpoint of a people pleaser, and if you do what you should do with an honest, undivided heart, then you will have defeated Satan and gained this aspect of the truth. If you always persist in living by the philosophy of Satan, protecting your relationships with others, never practicing the truth, and not daring to abide by the principles, then will you be able to practice the truth in other matters? You will still have no faith or strength. If you are never able to seek or accept the truth, then will such faith in God allow you to obtain the truth? (No.) And if you cannot obtain the truth, can you be saved? You cannot. If you always live by the philosophy of Satan, utterly devoid of the truth reality, then you can never be saved” (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. Part Three). God’s word made it clear to me that my principles had always been to maintain relationships and never make enemies, instead of practicing God’s word. When I saw something that didn’t align with the truth, I’d simply give in and tolerate it, wanting to protect my relationships with others, allowing me to live in a state of safety. I saw that I was taking the path of moderation, being totally unprincipled in my actions. God asks us to speak and act according to His word, to be people that love what He loves, hate what He hates, and know good from evil, to be able to discern all kinds of people, and to treat others according to principles. Only this practice accords with God’s intention. Still, I clearly saw Leslie holding up work in her duty but didn’t criticize or expose her. I comforted her when I saw her cry and played the nice guy, in spite of my feelings. In this, I was protecting our relationship and taking Satan’s side by indulging her. I was so foolish! Before, I didn’t think that kind of conduct was such a problem. It was only when the facts were revealed that I saw living by these philosophies for worldly dealings really wasn’t the right path. I was a supervisor, but was

always afraid of offending people and had no sense of justice. I didn't dare point out issues I found or fellowship to resolve them, leading to problems cropping up over and over again. This wasn't doing real work; this was resisting God!

Later on, I found a path of practice in God's word. God's word says: **"If you want to establish a normal relationship with God, your heart must be turned toward Him; with this as a foundation, you will then have normal relationships with other people too. If you do not have a normal relationship with God, then no matter what you do to maintain your relationships with other people, no matter how hard you work or how much energy you put in, it will all belong to a human philosophy for worldly dealings. You will be protecting your position among people and attaining their praise through human perspectives and human philosophies, rather than establishing normal interpersonal relationships according to the word of God. If you do not focus on your relationships with people, and maintain a normal relationship with God instead, if you are willing to give your heart to God and learn to submit to Him, then your interpersonal relationships will naturally become normal. These relationships will then not be built upon the flesh, but upon the foundation of God's love. You will have almost no fleshly interactions with other people, but on a spiritual level, there will be fellowship and mutual love, comfort, and provision between you. All of this is done upon the foundation of a desire to satisfy God—these relationships are not maintained through human philosophies for worldly dealings, they are formed naturally when one carries a burden for God. They do not require any artificial, human effort from you, you need only to practice according to the principles of God's words"** (The

Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. It Is Very Important to Establish a Normal

Relationship With God). God's word made it clear to me that normal interpersonal relations aren't maintained through philosophies for worldly dealings. They are established on the foundation of practicing His word. When things come up, we need to practice the truth, act according to principles, protect church work, and shoulder a burden for brothers' and sisters' lives. This is the only way to have normal interpersonal relations. I recalled some brothers' and sisters' experiential testimonies. When they noticed others' problems, they were able to point them out and help them according to God's word. Although people sometimes lost face, if they pursued the truth, they could use this fellowship and criticism to discover their shortcomings, know their corrupt dispositions, amend their incorrect states, make progress in their lives, and get better and better results in their duties. That's being truly loving and helpful. But for those who don't pursue the truth, being criticized and pruned is a revelation for them. Because they are averse to the truth, when they're pruned, they try to make excuses and resist, with zero acceptance. This kind of person is not a true brother or sister and should be rejected and avoided. Realizing this, I felt even more that only God's word is the criterion for our actions and conduct, that we should treat others according to God's word. That's the best way to conduct ourselves and aligns with the standards for normal humanity.

Once, I found that a sister was being especially arrogant, self-righteous, and not accepting suggestions. She always did things based on her mood and delayed work. I had to fellowship and point out her problems so she could reflect and know herself, but I was somewhat apprehensive. What if she wouldn't accept it? Would she become biased against me and say I was targeting her? I recalled my previous failure, and what I'd read in God's word not long before, and it stirred something in me. If I disregarded the church's work in my effort to protect our relationship, I would be

offending God. This time, God was observing my attitude to see whether I'd repented and changed. I couldn't treat people like I had before. I remembered God's word says: **"When faced with such things, you must pray to God and call out to Him, begging for salvation and asking that He give you more faith and strength and enable you to abide by the principles, do what you should do, handle things according to the principles, stand firm in the position you should stand in, protect the interests of God's house, and prevent any harm from coming to the work of God's house"** (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. Part Three). I felt like God was beside me, encouraging me to take this step. I prayed to God, asking Him to give me faith and strength so I could practice the truth, put the church's work first, and stop being afraid to offend people, protecting relationships. Having prayed, I sought out that sister. Along with exposing her problem based on her consistent behavior, I also pointed out that she was arrogant and self-righteous and didn't accept others' suggestions, that this was being averse to the truth and having a satanic disposition. I said if she kept obstructing church work without repenting or changing, she'd be dismissed. After I said all that, I didn't feel like I always did before, afraid of being hated. Instead, I felt more relaxed and at peace.

Thinking back, I always used to live by satanic philosophies for worldly dealings, afraid of offending people, and of disputes and conflicts arising. In my interactions, I always considered others' faces and protected relationships with others, missing out on a lot of chances to practice the truth. Now, when I have to point out and expose people's problems, I still feel a little afraid, but I can consciously pray to God, and put right my own intentions and views to practice according to the principles. This experience has allowed me to correct my mistaken views. I truly thank God!

71. My Misgivings Over Practicing the Truth

By Jiang Ping, China

In September 2021, I was responsible for an item of church work, and Zhao Ting was the team leader. When everyone would discuss work together, Zhao Ting would always insist on her own views and wouldn't listen to others. This would often land us in a deadlock and stop work from progressing. I wanted to talk to her about this, but my words were stuck in my throat when I remembered how Zhao Ting would often expose me as being arrogant, self-righteous, and insistent on my views before. Even though I knew what she said was true, I truly disliked it from the bottom of my heart. It felt like she was exposing my wounds by doing this and I wanted her to just stop talking. If I pointed out her problem now, wouldn't she feel the same pain that I did? I thought it best to keep quiet so that neither of us would feel bad. Furthermore, I didn't like being exposed and having my problems pointed out by others and hadn't changed but was still asking others to change, wouldn't that show I was completely irrational? If she turned the tables on me and said, "You don't even like accepting advice from others, so what gives you the right to criticize me?" then I'd have no response. Also, we normally got along very well and had a pretty good rapport, and spoke politely with each other. What if when I spoke out about her problems, she would no longer view me the same way, and didn't want to cooperate with me on work? With these things in mind, I didn't point out her problems.

Not long after, a sister named Wu Xin joined our team. After a while, I found that she wasn't making any progress. She was always competing against others, and when she didn't stack up, she'd sulk. I fellowshiped on some of God's words that related to her problems, and I drew on principles

to guide and help her. But she didn't reflect on her problem and said that the reason she wasn't getting results was because we hadn't fellowshiped on principles with her clearly. Seeing her like this, I wanted to fellowship and dissect her essence of pursuing reputation and status, and the consequences of carrying on like this. But then I recalled how she mentioned the revelation of her corruptions in a gathering, saying that she didn't like to point out others' problems and didn't like others always pointing out hers. I thought, "Reputation and status are important to me, too, and I want to gradually seek and enter into this aspect on my own. I don't want others to expose and point out my problems. If I speak too harshly, it'll make her unhappy. I'd best start by fellowshiping and helping her. Perhaps once she's grasped principles and gained some results, her not being able to satisfy her desire for vanity and status won't make her so negative." Thinking this, I stopped pointing out her problems. I later found out that Wu Xin had pretty poor humanity. She'd often speak to people in a belittling and sarcastic way, making them feel constrained, and sometimes she'd attack and exclude those with different views. When problems emerged at work, she didn't reflect at all and tried to shirk responsibility, and she wasn't getting any results in her duty. According to principles, she had to be dismissed. I thought doing that might offend her, so I reported her situation to a leader. But the leader was too busy to come, so she had me dismiss Wu Xin. When I met with her, I wanted to dissect her constant pursuit of reputation and status, her attacks and exclusion of different voices, and how she was walking the path of an antichrist so that she'd know the essence and consequences of her problems, but I swallowed back the words I was going to say. I thought of how she valued reputation and status and how fragile she was. If I exposed and dissected her problems, and she couldn't take it and developed a bias against me, what then? I thought it

best to hold my tongue. So, I just brought up how she wasn't getting results, and then I dismissed her, gave her some words of comfort, and had her reflect on herself properly. When the leader found out I hadn't dissected Wu Xin's behavior, she pruned me, saying, "Her problems were so serious, but you didn't expose or dissect them! You're too much of a people pleaser!" It was pretty hard to hear this. I knew that I hadn't seen to my responsibilities, but I didn't reflect on myself at the time. It wasn't until a later incident that I finally started to reflect.

At that time, Zhao Ting and her group organized some information about individuals to be expelled, but there were a lot of points that were unclear. Under normal circumstances, these kinds of low-level mistakes wouldn't occur. I asked the others what was going on, and they said that Zhao Ting was insisting on herself. No matter what anyone suggested, she shot them down. They all felt constrained and just had to do as she said. I felt so guilty when I heard this. I'd long since known about this problem of hers, but because I was afraid of offending her, I never exposed it, and as a result, the work had been delayed. I finally started to seek the truth and reflect on myself. I read a passage of God's word: **"Conscience and reason should both be components of a person's humanity. These are both the most fundamental and most important. What kind of person is one who lacks conscience and does not have the reason of normal humanity? Generally speaking, they are a person who lacks humanity, a person of extremely poor humanity. Going into more detail, what manifestations of lost humanity does this person exhibit? Have a go at analyzing what characteristics are found in such people and what specific manifestations they present. (They are selfish and base.) Selfish and base people are perfunctory in their actions and stand aloof from anything that does not concern them personally. They do not consider the**

interests of God's house, nor do they show consideration for God's intentions. They take on no burden of performing their duties or testifying for God, and they have no sense of responsibility. ... There are some people who do not take any responsibility regardless of the duty they are performing. They don't promptly report problems they discover to their superiors, either. When they see people being disruptive and disturbing, they turn a blind eye. When they see evil people committing evil, they don't try to stop them. They don't protect the interests of the house of God, or consider what their duty and responsibility is. When they perform their duty, people like this don't do any real work; they are people pleasers and are greedy for comfort; they speak and act only for their own vanity, face, status, and interests, and are only willing to devote their time and effort to things that benefit them" (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. In Giving One's Heart to God, One Can Obtain the Truth). God's word exposed my exact state. I'd seen that Zhao Ting had an arrogant disposition and constrained others, already impacting the work. As a supervisor, I should have pointed out and exposed her problem, but I worried she wouldn't accept it and then think poorly of me, so whenever I wanted to point out her problem, it felt like something was stuck in my throat and I couldn't get the words out. I used work as a pretense, thinking that if our relationship broke down, she wouldn't cooperate with my work. While it looked like I was considering the work, I really just didn't want to ruin our friendly and good relationship, and I wanted to make a good impression on my brothers and sisters. Besides, I clearly noticed that Wu Xin's problems were serious, but I was afraid that if I exposed and pointed out her problems, she'd view me poorly, so I just kept failing to expose her problems, and as a result, she didn't recognize herself and her corrupt disposition remained unchanged, and she

disrupted and disturbed the church work and made the others feel constrained. When doing my duty, I was only considering my own interests and my position in the hearts of others. I saw others disrupting and disturbing work by relying on their corrupt dispositions in their duties, and I just ignored it, not considering the church's work at all. I was so selfish, without any conscience or reason!

Later on, I read another passage of God's word: **“Until people have experienced God's work and understood the truth, it is Satan's nature that takes charge and dominates them from within. What, specifically, does that nature entail? For example, why are you selfish? Why do you protect your own position? Why do you have such strong feelings? Why do you enjoy those unrighteous things? Why do you like those evils? What is the basis for your fondness for such things? Where do these things come from? Why are you so happy to accept them? By now, you have all come to understand that the main reason behind all these things is that Satan's poison is within man. So what is Satan's poison? How can it be expressed? For example, if you ask, ‘How should people live? What should people live for?’ people will answer, ‘Every man for himself and the devil take the hindmost.’ This single phrase expresses the very root of the problem. Satan's philosophy and logic have become people's lives. No matter what people pursue, they do so for themselves—and so they live only for themselves. ‘Every man for himself and the devil take the hindmost’—this is the life philosophy of man, and it also represents human nature”** (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. How to Walk the Path of Peter). From the exposure of God's word, I understood the main reason I always turned a blind eye and was too scared to point out others' problems was because I relied on satanic philosophies like “Every man for himself and the devil take the hindmost,”

“Keeping silent on the faults of good friends makes for a long and good friendship,” and “If you strike others, don’t strike them in the face; if you call others out, don’t call out their shortcomings.” I always thought I should only do something if I would benefit from it, and that pointing out and exposing someone else’s problems would offend them and not benefit me, so I didn’t want to do it. I was too selfish, despicable, slippery, and deceitful. I saw that Zhao Ting was being arrogant, insistent, and not listening to others, and that she’d impacted the work, but I’d rather protect my relationship with her than expose or dissect her problems. I was always afraid that I’d offend her and was always compliant in order to please her. I was scared of offending people but not God and didn’t consider the interests of the church. I was living a vile and worthless life without conscience or reason. A person with conscience and reason can fellowship the truth to help others when they see others are in a bad state, and when they see someone disrupting and disturbing the church work, they can stand up to expose and stop them. As a supervisor, I should hold an even greater burden and responsibility. No matter if a brother or sister has a problem with their state or their work, I should fellowship and help them. If a person is disrupting and disturbing the church work, I should prune them, expose them, and stop them in good time. This is how a supervisor should do their job. But to protect the good impression others had of me, I didn’t even fulfill basic responsibilities. I was irresponsible toward the work, and I didn’t consider the life entry of my brothers and sisters at all. I saw that by being a people pleaser, I was actually being blackhearted and malicious. Doing my duty in this way is sickening and loathsome to God. If I carried on like this, I would be exposed and eliminated by God in the end. Realizing these things was very upsetting. I didn’t want to keep living like this, so I prayed to God, “God, I want to practice the truth, but my corrupt

disposition is so severe. Please enlighten me to know myself and find a path of practice.”

One day, in my devotionals, I read that God’s word says: **“In the church, stand firm in your testimony to Me, uphold the truth; right is right and wrong is wrong. Do not confuse black and white. You shall be at war with Satan and must completely vanquish it so that it never rises again. You must give everything you have to protect My testimony. This shall be the goal of your actions—do not forget this”** (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. Utterances of Christ in the Beginning, Chapter 41). God’s word gave me a path of practice. With everything, I need to uphold the truth principles and protect the church’s interests. Zhao Ting had already disturbed and disrupted the church’s work by relying on her corrupt disposition in her duties. I had to fellowship with her and expose and dissect her, so that she could know her problems. If she still didn’t reflect or repent, I had to transfer or dismiss her promptly. Later, I pointed out Zhao Ting’s problems to her and I read her some passages of God’s word exposing arrogant dispositions. By reading God’s word, she gained some knowledge of her arrogant disposition and then had made some improvements and changes. When everyone put forth different views in a discussion, she was able to seek and listen to them, no longer insisting on her own views. By not protecting my relationships with others and doing my duty according to the truth principles, I felt at ease. I finally had some human likeness by living like this.

Later on, I wondered, “Apart from my selfishness, meanness, and desire to protect my interests, what other things were constraining me to always be a people pleaser?” One day, in a gathering, I read God’s words that say: **“In a literal sense, ‘Do not impose on others that which you yourself do not desire’ means that if you do not like something, or do**

not like to do something, then you shouldn't force it onto other people either. This seems smart and reasonable, but if you use this satanic philosophy to handle every situation, then you will make many mistakes. It is likely that you will hurt, mislead, or even harm people. Just like how some parents are not fond of studying, but like to make their children study, and always try to reason with them, urging them to study hard. If you were to apply the requirement here to 'not impose on others that which you yourself do not desire,' then these parents shouldn't make their children study, because they themselves do not enjoy it. There are other people who believe in God, but do not pursue the truth; yet in their hearts they know that believing in God is the right path in life. If they see that their children do not believe in God and are not on the right path, they urge them to believe in God. Even though they themselves do not pursue the truth, they still want their children to pursue it and be blessed. In this situation, if they adhered to the saying 'Do not impose on others that which you yourself do not desire,' then these parents should not make their children believe in God. That would be in line with this satanic philosophy, but it also would have destroyed their children's chance at salvation. Who is responsible for this outcome? Does the traditional saying on moral conduct of not imposing on others that which you yourself do not desire not harm people? ... For example, some people do not love the truth; they covet the comforts of the flesh, and find ways to slack off when performing their duty. They are not willing to suffer or pay a price. They think that the saying 'Do not impose on others that which you yourself do not desire' puts it well, and tell people, 'You should learn how to enjoy yourselves. You don't need to properly perform your duty or suffer hardship or pay a price. If you can slack off, then slack off; if

you can muddle through something, then muddle through it. Don't make things so hard on yourselves. Look, I live this way— isn't it great? My life is just perfect! You're exhausting yourselves living that way! You should learn from me.' Does this not meet the requirement of 'not imposing on others that which you yourself do not desire'? If you act this way, are you a person with conscience and reason? (No.) If a person loses their conscience and reason, are they not lacking virtue? This is called lacking virtue. Why do we call it this? Because they crave comfort, they muddle through their duty, and incite and influence others to join them in being perfunctory and craving comfort. What is the problem with this? Being perfunctory and irresponsible in your duty is an act of trickery and resistance to God. If you continue to be perfunctory and do not repent, you will be exposed and eliminated” (The Word, Vol. 6. On the Pursuit of the Truth I. What It Means to Pursue the Truth (10)). “Do not impose on others that which you yourself do not desire'** is a very problematic saying. The holes and flaws in it are glaringly obvious; it is not even worth dissecting and discerning it. With the slightest examination, its errors and ridiculousness are plain to see. However, there are many among you who are easily persuaded and influenced by this saying and accept it without discernment. When interacting with others, you often use this saying to admonish yourself and exhort others. By doing this, you think that your character is particularly noble, and that your comportment is very reasonable. But without realizing it, these words have revealed the principle you live by and your stance on issues. At the same time, you have misled and misguided others into approaching people and circumstances with the same view and stance as you. You have acted like a veritable fence-straddler, and completely taken the middle road. You say, 'No matter what the issue**

is, there is no need to take it seriously. Don't make things difficult for yourself or others. If you make things difficult for other people, then you're making them difficult for yourself. Being kind to others is being kind to yourself. If you're hard on other people, then you're being hard on yourself. Why put yourself in a difficult position? Not imposing on others that which you yourself do not desire is the best thing you could do for yourself, and the most considerate.' This attitude is obviously one of not being meticulous in anything. You have no correct stance or perspective on any issue; you have a muddled view of everything. You are not meticulous and just turn a blind eye to things. When you finally stand before God and account for yourself, it will be a big muddle. Why is that? Because you always say you should not impose on others that which you yourself don't desire. This gives you great comfort and enjoyment, but at the same time it will cause you great trouble, making it so that you can't have a clear view or stance on many matters. Of course, it also makes you unable to understand clearly what God's requirements and standards for you are when you encounter these situations, or what outcome you should achieve. These things happen because you are not meticulous in anything; they are caused by your muddled attitude and view. Is not imposing on others that which you yourself don't desire the tolerant attitude you should have toward people and things? No, it is not. It is just a theory which appears right, noble, and kind from the outside, but is actually a thoroughly negative thing. Clearly, even less is it a truth principle that people should be **adhering to**" (The Word, Vol. 6. On the Pursuit of the Truth I. What It Means to Pursue the Truth (10)). God's words expose that Satan uses the saying of "Do not impose on others that which you yourself do not desire" to corrupt and mislead us, to make us think that we shouldn't impose onto others things that we

wouldn't like to do or can't do, and that this is rational behavior. I was living by relying on this idea. I clearly knew that Zhao Ting's arrogance and self-righteousness were impacting work, and I should have pointed out and exposed her problem, but I thought of how I often revealed an arrogant disposition and about how I disliked always being critiqued by others, so I thought that imposing something I didn't like onto another person was irrational, so I was too scared to point out Zhao Ting's problem. I clearly knew that Wu Xin was just working for reputation and status, and her arrogance was constraining others and disrupting and disturbing the work. She needed to be exposed and pruned, but I thought about how I valued my reputation and status greatly and wasn't willing to have my problems pointed out or exposed by others, so I lived by the viewpoint of "Do not impose on others that which you yourself do not desire" and so I didn't expose her. I thought that being exposed and critiqued was painful and humiliating, and I hoped that others wouldn't prune or critique me, so I didn't want to do the same to others. Actually, I was just accommodating and protecting myself. I was protecting my vanity and status and wouldn't accept the truth and even connived and accommodated others. I was rebellious and resisting God and I was allowing others to do the same. In essence, I was hoping that nobody would practice the truth or experience God's judgment and chastisement or be pruned. I was truly despicable and immoral! We have been corrupted by Satan and are filled with satanic dispositions. Our natures are arrogant, conceited, selfish, deceitful, and inclined to seek reputation and status. Without the judgment and exposure of God's word, without being pruned, and without the criticism or help of others, we cannot help but disrupt the church's work. Zhao Ting and Wu Xin were revealing corrupt dispositions and on the wrong path, and if nobody critiqued or exposed them, they would disrupt the church's work. If

their infraction was minor, they would be dismissed, but if it was more serious, they would be expelled. I was living by satanic philosophies, seeing problems but not bringing them up. This is secretly allowing others to act by their satanic dispositions, and this would hurt myself and others in the end. Seeing that I'd been living by the satanic poison of "Do not impose on others that which you yourself do not desire," not only was I not doing my duty well, but I was also acting as Satan's accomplice and disrupting church work. Realizing these things was hard to take, and I wanted to confess and repent to God.

One day, I read a passage of God's word that says: **"God does not demand that people not impose on others that which they themselves do not desire, instead He asks people to be clear on the principles they should observe when handling different situations. If it is correct and in line with the truth in God's words, then you must cling to it. And not only must you cling to it, you must admonish, persuade, and fellowship with others, so that they understand exactly what God's intentions are, and what the truth principles are. This is your responsibility and obligation. God does not ask you to take the middle road, and even less does He ask you to show off how big your heart is. You should cling to the things God has admonished you for and taught to you, and what God talks about in His words: the requirements, the criteria, and the truth principles that people should be observing. Not only must you cling to them, and hold on to them forever, but you must also practice these truth principles by leading by example, as well as persuading, supervising, helping, and guiding others to cling to, observe, and practice them in the same way you do. God demands that you do this—this is what He entrusts to you. You cannot just make requirements of yourself while ignoring others. God demands that you take the correct**

stance on issues, cling to the correct criteria, and know precisely what the criteria in God's words are, and that you figure out precisely what the truth principles are. Even if you cannot accomplish this, even if you are unwilling, if you don't like it, if you have notions, or if you resist it, you must treat it as your responsibility, as your obligation. You must fellowship with people on the positive things that come from God, on things which are right and correct, and use them to help, impact, and guide others, so that people can benefit from and be edified by them, and walk the correct path in life. This is your responsibility, and you should not stubbornly cling to the idea 'Do not impose on others that which you yourself do not desire' which Satan has put into your mind. In God's eyes, that saying is just a philosophy for worldly dealings; it is a way of thinking that contains Satan's trickery; it is not at all the correct path, nor is it a positive thing. All God requires of you, is for you to be an upright person who understands clearly what they should and should not do. He does not call you to be a people-pleaser or a fence-straddler; He has not called you to take the middle road. When a matter concerns the truth principles, you must say what needs to be said, and understand what needs to be understood. If someone does not understand something but you do, and you can give pointers and help them out, then you absolutely must fulfill this responsibility and obligation. You must not just stand by the wayside and watch, and even less should you cling to the philosophies that Satan has put into your mind such as not imposing on others that which you yourself do not desire. Do you understand? (Yes.) That which is right and positive is so even if you don't like it, aren't willing to do it, aren't capable of doing and achieving it, are resistant to it, or develop notions against it. The essence of God's words and the truth won't change just because

mankind has corrupt dispositions and has certain emotions, feelings, desires and notions. The essence of God's words and the truth will never, ever change. As soon as you know, understand, experience and attain God's words and the truth, it is your obligation to fellowship your experiential testimonies to others. This will allow even more people to understand God's intentions, comprehend and attain the truth, understand God's demands and standards and have a grasp of the truth principles. By doing this, these people will gain a path of practice when they encounter issues in their daily life and won't become muddled or be fettered by Satan's various ideas and views. The saying on moral conduct 'Do not impose on others that which you yourself do not desire' is really and truly Satan's cunning scheme to control the minds of people. If you always uphold this, then you are someone who lives according to satanic philosophies; a person who completely lives in a satanic disposition. If you do not follow God's way, then you do not love or pursue the truth. No matter what happens, the principle you should follow and the most important thing you must do is help people as much as you can. You should not practice what Satan says, which is to 'not impose on others that which you yourself do not desire,' and be a 'smart' people-pleaser. What does it mean to help people as much as you can? It means fulfilling your responsibilities and obligations. As soon as you see that something is part of your responsibilities and obligations, you should fellowship on God's words and the truth. This is what it means to fulfill your responsibilities and obligations" (The Word, Vol. 6. On the Pursuit of the Truth I. What It Means to Pursue the Truth (10)). From God's word I came to understand that God requires us to practice the truth and uphold principles in all things, and that when we do our duties together, when we see someone violating principles or disturbing church

work, we should critique and help them. Only when everyone lives by God's word can we improve in our duties. When it comes to issues of principle, we can't be afraid to offend people or consider their feelings. We must act according to the truth principles and protect church work. Whether others accept it or not, we all should practice the truth and fulfill our responsibility. As a supervisor, my responsibility is to fellowship and resolve problems in good time when I see them. If I don't resolve the problems I see, just play the people pleaser, and take the middle way, I am not fulfilling my responsibilities and am resisting God. Also, it's not that I can't point out others' problems just because I reveal corruptions myself. When I reveal corruptions, I need to seek the truth and reflect on myself, that is my own matter. But, when I see others violating principles and causing damage to the church's work, I have to fellowship, expose, and stop them. This is protecting the church's work and is my responsibility. I shouldn't confuse the two things. I value my reputation and status a lot, and have an arrogant disposition, I need to reflect and seek the truth to resolve these things and not accommodate myself and indulge others. I used to live by the satanic philosophy of "Do not impose on others that which you yourself do not desire," thinking that I shouldn't ask others to do things I didn't like to do or couldn't do myself. As a result, opportunities to practice the truth slipped away. I finally saw that my views had been ridiculous and absurd.

Later, when I saw others violating principles and impacting church work, I exposed, dissected, and fellowshipped with them on their problems, and although I was still worried they'd think poorly of me, I wasn't overcautious or overthinking like I had been before; I just thought about how I could help them and protect the church's work. By practicing like this, I saw the brothers and sisters making progress in their duties and I was

filled with joy. When resolving others' problems, I could reflect more on myself, and I unwittingly discovered some corrupt dispositions I hadn't known of before, which made me even more motivated to pursue the truth and resolve my problems. Practicing in this way made me feel closer to God; when I forsook the flesh and practiced the truth more, it made me feel at peace and at ease living like this.

72. Learning From Reporting a False Leader

By Christina, USA

In June 2021, two leaders in our church were dismissed for not doing actual work. While I fellowshiped on dissecting their behavior, a sister raised a question, “Before these two false leaders were dismissed, we were somewhat aware of their issues. Also, recently, the church has been fellowshiping the truth about discerning false leaders, so everyone understood a bit about their behavior. Why then did no one report the issues of these two leaders before they were dismissed?” Hearing her words deeply moved me. I reflected on myself. Despite having heard so many truth principles about discerning false leaders, I still hadn’t consciously discerned false leaders around me in real life. Sometimes, even when I noticed some problems with the leaders, I adopted an indifferent attitude. I realized this attitude was not in line with God’s intentions, so I wanted to change. I needed to be aware of discerning the people, events, and things around me, supervise the leaders’ work according to God’s requirements, and offer guidance and help if I notice the leaders doing the work against the principles. If I identified a false leader or an antichrist, I needed to report it to the upper leaders to protect the church’s interests.

Later, I lived with Sister Wendy, a leader of another church. At first, I thought she was amiable, didn’t have the airs of a leader, and was easy to get along with. However, after a period of time, I noticed she lived out poor humanity. She seemed to focus a lot on eating and was quite lazy. When she found things dirty, she wouldn’t take the initiative to clean, but only mentioned it verbally. Sometimes, she asked others to do tasks that could easily be done by herself. The sisters around her were all somewhat displeased with her behavior. At first, I thought Wendy only had issues with

living out her humanity, which was not something of principles, so I didn't take it to heart. Later, I noticed that she often attended online fellowships in her room, sometimes even brought her laptop to the dining table and ate while fellowshipping, and sometimes, she would fellowship late into the night, but the brothers and sisters said she rarely resolved their issues and difficulties in their duties. Initially, I felt that as a church leader, she had to attend to various aspects of the work, which wasn't easy. I didn't think it was a big deal if there were some shortcomings in her work. So I didn't pay attention to those things. But later, I felt something was wrong. As a church leader, her primary duty was to fellowship the truth and solve the brothers' and sisters' problems and difficulties. She often held online gatherings with the brothers and sisters, appearing very busy, but she didn't solve actual problems. Wasn't this just preaching empty doctrines without doing actual work? I recalled God's fellowship exposing that some false leaders spend all day in online gatherings, appearing busy, but only speaking words and doctrines and doing superficial work. As for the real problems in work related to the truth principles, they can't discover or fellowship clearly on them, causing much work to be delayed. I wondered if Wendy might be one of the false leaders God had exposed. Later, I heard a sister say that Wendy couldn't fellowship on the truth realities or solve actual problems in gatherings. Once, the sister's state was quite negative and it affected her duties. Knowing this, Wendy only sent her a few passages of God's words without fellowshipping. There were also several sisters not cooperating in harmony and it was reported to Wendy, but she did not fellowship with them to resolve these issues. Later, I found that Wendy lacked consideration and principles while arranging things. There was a sister whose duty was video production. Wendy thought that the sister was also suitable for watering new believers. Without investigating the sister's duty situation

ahead of time or discussing with the supervisor to see if it was appropriate, Wendy directly assigned her to water new believers part-time. Everyone felt that Wendy was thinking too simply about the situation, because watering duty requires timely understanding and resolving the states and difficulties of new believers. To do this duty well requires a significant amount of time and energy. The sister was skilled in video production, and if not coordinated properly, assigning her to water new believers would delay her main duty. However, Wendy still assigned her to water new believers. Seeing Wendy's work arrangement, I was somewhat incredulous and thought, "She is so careless in arranging things, lacking communication and seeking. How then would she handle the significant matters in church work? Does she have the caliber and work ability to be a leader? Can she actually do real work?" I kept questioning in my heart and vaguely felt that Wendy had some problems. I thought of reporting to upper leaders to have them investigate and understand her actual performance. But then I thought, "If my reports are valid and Wendy is indeed a false leader, then this is an act of justice that protects the church work. But if my view is incomprehensive and she doesn't have serious problems and can do some real work, will the brothers and sisters say I lack understanding of the truth, blindly report, and meddle recklessly? If it causes disruption and disturbance, will they say I have bad humanity and cannot treat a leader correctly, casually judging her? Will the upper leaders dismiss me then? If Wendy finds out I report her problems, will she hold a grudge against me and seize upon my issues? Wendy and I live together and see each other every day. How awkward would that be!" Thinking about these things, I hesitated and comforted myself, "What I've seen are not major issues, just minor flaws in living out humanity and in work ability. Seeing her attend fellowships online every day, she seems to have some sense of burden.

Forget it; I won't report her. If she really doesn't do actual work, the brothers and sisters in her church will report it. The leaders and workers will follow up on and supervise her work, so they should understand her issues. I should stop worrying and meddling so much." After thinking back and forth, I decided not to report her issues. But when I decided to let it go, I felt uneasy in my heart and my conscience was troubled. I clearly saw some manifestations of her not doing actual work and recognized it as a problem, but I kept wanting to avoid and bypass it. This is being irresponsible! If she was indeed a false leader who didn't do actual work, it would directly affect the brothers' and sisters' life entry and delay the church's work. I reflected on myself: Why was I reluctant to report Wendy's problems? What was I worried about? What corrupt disposition was constraining me?

Later, I read these words of God: **"The most prominent aspect of man's philosophies for worldly dealings is cunningness. People think that if they are not cunning, they will be liable to offend others and unable to protect themselves; they think that they must be cunning enough not to hurt or offend anyone, thereby keeping themselves safe, protecting their livelihoods, and gaining a firm foothold among other people. Nonbelievers all live by Satan's philosophies. They are all people pleasers and do not offend anyone. You have come to the house of God, read the word of God, and listened to the sermons of God's house, so why are you unable to practice the truth, speak from the heart, and be an honest person? Why are you always a people pleaser? People pleasers only protect their own interests, and not the interests of the church. When they see someone do evil and harm the church's interests, they ignore it. They like to be people pleasers, and do not offend anyone. This is irresponsible, and that kind of person is too**

cunning and untrustworthy. To protect their own vanity and pride, and to maintain their reputation and status, some people are happy to help others, and to sacrifice for their friends no matter the cost. But when they need to protect the interests of the house of God, the truth, and justice, their good intentions are gone, they have completely disappeared. When they should practice the truth, they do not practice it at all. What is going on? To protect their own dignity and pride, they will pay any price and endure any suffering. But when they need to do real work and handle practical affairs, to safeguard the church's work and positive things, and to protect and provide for God's chosen people, why do they no longer have the strength to pay any price and endure any suffering? That is inconceivable. Actually, they have a kind of disposition that is averse to the truth. Why do I say that their disposition is averse to the truth? Because whenever something involves bearing witness for God, practicing the truth, protecting God's chosen people, fighting against Satan's schemes, or protecting the work of the church, they flee and hide, and don't attend to any proper matters. Where is their heroism and spirit to endure suffering? Where do they apply these things? This is easy to see. Even if someone reproves them, saying that they should not be so selfish and base, and protect themselves, and that they ought to protect the work of the church, they don't really care. They say to themselves, 'I don't do those things, and they do not have anything to do with me. What good would acting like that be for my pursuit of fame, gain, and status?' They are not a person who pursues the truth. They only like to seek fame, gain, and status, and they do not do the work that God has entrusted to them at all. So, when they are needed to do the work of the church, they simply choose to flee. This means that, in their hearts, they do not like positive things,

and are not interested in the truth. This is a clear manifestation of being averse to the truth” (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. Part Three). **“Most people wish to pursue and practice the truth, but much of the time they merely have a resolution and the desire to do so; the truth has not become their life. As a result, when they come across evil forces or encounter evil people and bad people committing evil deeds, or false leaders and antichrists doing things in a way that violates principles—thus disturbing the work of the church and harming God’s chosen ones—they lose the courage to stand up and speak out. What does it mean when you have no courage? Does it mean that you are timid or inarticulate? Or is it that you do not understand thoroughly, and therefore do not have the confidence to speak up? Neither; this is primarily the consequence of being constrained by corrupt dispositions. One of the corrupt dispositions you reveal is a deceitful disposition; when something happens to you, the first thing you think of is your own interests, the first thing you consider is the consequences, whether this will be beneficial to you. This is a deceitful disposition, is it not? Another is a selfish and base disposition. You think, ‘What does a loss to the interests of God’s house have to do with me? I’m not a leader, so why should I care? It’s got nothing to do with me. It’s not my responsibility.’ Such thoughts and words are not something that you consciously think, but are produced by your subconscious—which is the corrupt disposition revealed when people encounter an issue”** (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. Part Three). God’s words exposed my corrupt disposition. I was indeed selfish and deceitful. I saw that Wendy didn’t solve actual problems or do actual work in many matters, and her deeds were already harming the church’s interests. Yet, I was worried that if I reported her wrongly, the brothers and sisters would think badly of me,

that I might be dismissed, and even more afraid of offending Wendy and damaging our relationship, making it difficult to get along in the future. So, I was unwilling to report her. To protect myself and my own interests, I kept silent about the problems I saw. I didn't practice the truth or protect the church's work at all, which is truly detestable and hateful to God. Thinking about how Wendy lacked principles in her actions, couldn't distinguish priorities in her work, and did not do actual work, although I couldn't be 100% sure she was a false leader, I could see that her issues were already affecting the brothers' and sisters' life entry and the church's work. I should report these issues to the upper-level leaders as soon as possible, letting them understand the situation and investigate and verify. If she was confirmed to be a false leader, she should be dismissed according to principles. If she merely had some deviations in her work, the leaders could help her through fellowshiping on these issues. Otherwise, if she continued working like this, it would delay the church's work and harm the brothers' and sisters' life entry. However, I previously thought that Wendy's problems were not directly related to me, and reporting them wrongly might harm my own vanity and future. Since I hadn't seen through her problems, I used "I haven't seen through them, and I'm afraid of reporting wrongly" as an excuse not to report her to upper leaders. I also made the excuse that if she was truly a false leader not doing actual work, other brothers and sisters would report her. I wanted to push the "offending matter" onto others and hide like a coward. To maintain my relationship with Wendy and protect my own vanity, prospects, and destiny, I didn't consider the church's interests or protect church work at all. I was extremely selfish and deceitful, following Satan's philosophies like "Every man for himself and the devil take the hindmost," "Sensible people are good at self-protection, seeking only to avoid making mistakes," and "Let things drift if they do not affect

one personally.” These things had become deeply rooted in my heart, dominating my thoughts, causing me to always consider personal benefits in what I said and did and to be overcautious and indecisive. Even when I saw problems with a leader, I was unwilling to report her, just looking on and watching things unfold as the interests of the church were harmed. I saw that living by satanic dispositions and philosophies had made me truly despicable and sordid, and that I was completely lacking in integrity or human likeness. If I continued this way and didn’t repent, I would only be spurned and eliminated by God. These thoughts frightened me, and I realized that I needed to break free from the bonds of satanic disposition quickly and not be controlled by it anymore.

In my reflection, I also realized that I had a wrong viewpoint. I worried that I might not see things accurately or comprehensively, and that if I reported something wrongly, it would cause disruptions and disturbances. Because of this, I didn’t dare to report Wendy’s problems. Later, I quieted my heart and pondered, “Is this viewpoint correct? Does it align with the truth principles?” I remembered these words of God: **“Are the talented people promoted and cultivated by the house of God adequately capable of undertaking their work and doing their duty well during the promotion and cultivation period or prior to promotion and cultivation? Of course not. Thus, it is unavoidable that, during the cultivation period, these people will experience pruning, judgment and chastisement, exposure and even dismissal; this is normal, this is training and cultivation. People must not have any high expectations or unrealistic demands of those who are promoted and cultivated; that would be unreasonable, and unfair to them. You can supervise their work. If you discover problems or things that violate principles in the course of their work, you can raise the issue and seek the truth to**

resolve these matters. What you should not do is judge, condemn, attack, or exclude them, because they are just in the cultivation period, and should not be viewed as people who have been made perfect, much less as people who are blameless, or as people who are possessed of the truth reality. ... So what is the most reasonable way to treat them? To regard them as ordinary people and, when you need to seek someone out regarding a problem, to fellowship with them and learn from each other's strengths and complement each other. In addition, it is everyone's responsibility to keep an eye on whether leaders and workers are doing real work, whether they can use the truth to solve problems; these are the standards and principles for measuring whether a leader or worker is up to standard. If a leader or worker is capable of dealing with and solving general problems, then they are competent. But if they can't even handle and fix ordinary problems, they are not fit to be a leader or worker, and must be quickly removed from their position. Someone else must be chosen, and the work of the house of God must not be delayed. Delaying the work of the house of God is hurting oneself and others, it is good for no one" (The Word, Vol. 5.

The Responsibilities of Leaders and Workers. The Responsibilities of Leaders and Workers (5)). From God's words, I understood the principles of dealing with leaders and workers. Leaders and workers are still in the training period; they have not yet achieved salvation or perfection and are also corrupted people. We need to treat them correctly: If a leader only reveals corruption or has work deviations due to a short practice period that are not substantial issues, we should help or prune them with love. However, if a leader or worker is of poor caliber, lacks work ability, and cannot do actual work, or if a leader's humanity has problems and they follow the wrong path, and don't do actual work, then continuing to use such a leader will delay the brothers' and

sisters' life entry and church work. When discovering such false leaders, we need to expose and report them. God has never said that if we can't see something clearly, we can just sit back and ignore it or we don't have to practice the truth. Instead, for difficulties and problems we can't perceive clearly, we should seek out those who understand the truth to fellowship, seek truth principles, or report these things to upper leaders. Even if we report something wrongly, it doesn't matter; the most important thing is that the problem gets solved. If we sit back and do nothing because we can't see something clearly or fear reporting something wrongly, and the situation worsens as events take their course, harming the church's interests and delaying church work, it will end up being too late to say anything, and the damage will become irreparable. Before, I wasn't clear on what constitutes disruption and disturbance, but later, through seeking and fellowshiping, I understood more. Whether a person's action counts as disruption and disturbance mainly depends on whether their intentions are right and whether the issues they report are true and involve the church's interests or principles. If their intentions are right, what's being reported is true and is for the sake of protecting the church's interests, then even if they don't see clearly whether a leader is false at the time, reporting problems they see based on facts is protecting the church's work and is not disruption and disturbance. However, if their intentions are wrong, and they have ulterior motives like vying for power, seizing on a leader's work deviations to make a mountain out of a molehill, to overthrow them and take their place, or harboring resentment due to pruning from the leader, finding faults and distorting facts to attack and judge the leader to vent personal grievances, or nitpicking the leader according to their own arrogant disposition, seizing on the leader's revelations of corruption, deviations, issues, deficiencies, or shortcomings in their duties, and raising objections at every turn and trying

to find leverage without letting go, this constitutes disturbance and disruption. Realizing this, I gained a better understanding of the distinction between normal seeking and reporting issues and disruption and disturbance.

After understanding the principles, I thought about Wendy's issues again, and I realized her living out poor humanity wasn't a substantial issue and could be addressed with appropriate guidance and help at the right opportunity. However, her hasty and unprincipled arrangements had disturbed the brothers' and sisters' duties and the church work. She was also inattentive to her main responsibilities, lacked a genuine sense of burden, and failed to achieve results in the work she was in charge of and didn't resolve the states and issues of the brothers and sisters. These matters related to whether she could do and whether she had done real work. Although I couldn't see these things clearly and couldn't label her as a false leader, I could make a report and seek guidance. Since my intention was not to make life hard for her or gain leverage against her, practicing in this way was appropriate. I couldn't use "If I can't see something clearly, reporting it wrongly would cause disturbance and disruption" as an excuse to muddle through this matter. That would be irresponsible for the church's work and a manifestation of not protecting the church's interests or practicing the truth.

Later, I read another passage from God's words: **"Once the truth has become life in you, when you observe someone who is blasphemous toward God, unfearful of God, and perfunctory while performing their duty, or who disrupts and disturbs church work, you will respond according to the truth principles, and will be able to identify and expose them as necessary. ... If you are someone who truly believes in God, then even if you have yet to gain the truth and life, at the very least you will speak and act from the side of God; at the very least, you**

will not stand idly by when you see the interests of the house of God being compromised. When you have the urge to turn a blind eye, you will feel guilty, and ill at ease, and will say to yourself, ‘I can’t sit here and do nothing, I must stand up and say something, I must take responsibility, I must expose this evil behavior, I must stop it, so that the interests of the house of God are not harmed, and the church life is not disturbed.’ If the truth has become your life, then not only will you have this courage and resolve, and will you be capable of understanding the matter completely, but you will also fulfill the responsibility you should bear for God’s work and for the interests of His house, and your duty will thereby be fulfilled” (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. Part Three). From God’s words, I understood that those who have truth realities possess a God-fearing heart. When faced with situations, they act according to the truth principles. When they see issues that harm the church’s interests or disrupt and disturb church work, they don’t stand idly by or ignore them, nor do they prioritize maintaining their relationships with others or protecting their own interests. Instead, they focus on protecting the church’s interests and work. They have the courage to expose negative things and act according to principles, and they have a sense of burden and are responsible in their duties. Now that God has arranged for me to see the issues with Wendy, I had the responsibility to follow up and resolve them. I couldn’t turn a blind eye. I had to bring these issues to light and seek guidance from upper leaders. Regardless of how the brothers and sisters might view me or whether I might face suppression or torment, I must act according to the truth principles. I should have faith in God and believe in His righteousness. With these thoughts in mind, I let go of my worries. Later on, I approached an upper leader to report the issues. The leader listened carefully and patiently, encouraging me to speak openly

about whatever I had seen. She said that God's house especially supports those who can truly expose and report false leaders and antichrists, and that God is comforted by such people. So, I detailed all of Wendy's problems. The leader also felt that there were problems with Wendy, saying that every time she checked on Wendy's work, Wendy would give positive reports, but there was no actual progress. The leader also thought of looking into Wendy's performance.

The next day, the leader asked the brothers and sisters who knew Wendy to write evaluations. The results were shocking—Wendy's issues were far more serious than I had imagined. From the brothers' and sisters' evaluations, I saw that while Wendy appeared to be busy, attending online gatherings every day, usually on time for gatherings, and spending much time in gatherings, her fellowship was just words and doctrines, and couldn't resolve actual problems. One time, a sister, who was in a negative state, actively sought her out for fellowship, leaving her messages several times, but Wendy never came to help her. When they finally arranged a time, before even starting the fellowship, Wendy left the sister alone and went to handle personal matters, displaying a particular coldness and selfishness. She rarely checked on or followed up with the brothers' and sisters' duties, and when she occasionally did, she was merely going through the motions. She didn't proactively identify or resolve various issues and difficulties, and she wasn't fulfilling the role of a leader at all. When she saw poor results in the brothers' and sisters' duties, she would just remind or prod them on as if she were some foreman at a factory. As for the actual issues like where their duties got stuck and how to find solutions, she never paid them any mind. Furthermore, she lacked principles in personnel reassignments. She reassigned two key gospel workers to do general affairs duties, which soon impacted the gospel work, and so she

reassigned them back. She did the same in finding waterers, never considering the situation of brothers' and sisters' duties, and just picking whomever she thought appropriate without thorough consideration, resulting in disturbing brothers' and sisters' duties and disrupting the church's work.... From the brothers' and sisters' exposure of each of her behaviors, it was clear that Wendy not only failed to advance the church's work she was responsible for but actually hindered it.

Later, I read two passages of God's words which helped me better understand the essence of Wendy's behaviors. God's words say: **“How should one judge if a leader is fulfilling the responsibilities of leaders and workers, or if they are a false leader? At the most basic level, one must look at whether they are capable of doing real work, at whether or not they have this caliber. Then, one should look at whether they have the burden to do this work well. Ignore how nice the things they say sound and how much they seem to understand the doctrines, and ignore how talented and gifted they are when they handle external matters—these things are not important. What is most crucial is whether they are able to properly carry out the most fundamental items of work of the church, whether they can solve problems using the truth, and whether they can lead people into the truth reality. This is the most fundamental and essential work. If they are incapable of doing these items of real work, then no matter how good their caliber is, how talented they are, or how much they can endure hardship and pay a price, they are still a false leader. Some people say, ‘Forget that they don’t do any real work now. They have good caliber and they’re capable. If they train for a while, they are bound to be able to do real work. Besides, they haven’t done anything bad and they haven’t done evil or caused disruptions or disturbances—how can You say that they**

are a false leader?’ How can we explain this? It doesn’t matter how talented you are, what level of caliber and education you possess, how many slogans you can shout, or how many words and doctrines are in your grasp; regardless of how busy you are or how exhausted you are in a day, or how far you’ve traveled, how many churches you visit, or how much risk you take and suffering you endure—none of these matter. What matters is whether you are performing your work based on the work arrangements, whether you are accurately implementing those arrangements; whether, during your leadership, you are participating in every specific work you are responsible for, and how many real issues you have actually resolved; how many individuals have come to understand the truth principles because of your leadership and guidance, and how much the church’s work has advanced and developed—what matters is whether or not you have achieved these results. Regardless of the specific work you’re involved in, what matters is whether you are consistently following up on and directing the work rather than acting high and mighty and issuing orders. Besides this, what also matters is whether or not you have life entry while doing your duty, whether you can deal with matters according to principles, whether you possess a testimony of putting the truth into practice, and whether you can handle and resolve the real issues faced by God’s chosen people. These and other similar things are all criteria for assessing whether or not a leader or worker has fulfilled **their responsibilities**” (The Word, Vol. 5. The Responsibilities of Leaders and Workers. The Responsibilities of Leaders and Workers (9)). **“False leaders are basically incapable of doing essential, critical church work. They just handle some simple, general affairs; their work doesn’t play a critical or decisive role in the work of the church as a whole, and it does not produce real results.**

Their fellowship basically just covers a few trite and commonplace topics, it's all oft-repeated words and doctrines and it is incredibly hollow, broad, and lacking in detail. Their fellowship only contains stuff that people can understand from reading something in a literal way. These false leaders cannot resolve the real problems God's chosen people have in their life entry at all; in particular, they are even less capable of resolving people's notions, imaginings, and revelations of corrupt dispositions. The main thing is that false leaders simply cannot shoulder the vital work arranged by God's house, such as gospel work, film production work, or text-based work. In particular, when it comes to work that involves professional knowledge, while false leaders may know quite clearly that they are laymen in these fields, they do not study them, nor do they do research, and less still are they able to give others specific guidance or resolve any problems related to them. And yet they still shamelessly hold gatherings, talking endlessly about empty theories, and speaking words and doctrines. False leaders know very well that they cannot do this kind of work, yet they pretend to be experts, act conceited, and always use grand doctrines to chide others. They are unable to answer anyone's questions, yet they find pretexts and excuses to chide others, asking why they aren't learning the profession, why they do not seek the truth, and why they are unable to resolve their own problems. These false leaders, who are laymen in these fields and cannot resolve any problems, still lecture others from up on high. On the surface, they appear very busy to other people, as if they're able to do a lot of work and are very capable, but in reality, they are nothing. False leaders are clearly unable to do real work, yet they enthusiastically busy themselves, and always say the same platitudes at gatherings, repeating themselves over and over again,

without being able to resolve a single real problem. People get very fed up with this, and are unable to derive any edification at all from it. This kind of work is terribly inefficient, and it yields no results. This is how false leaders work, and the work of the church is delayed because of it. Yet false leaders still feel they are doing great work and that they are very capable, when the fact is that they have not done a single aspect of the church's work well. They don't know if the leaders and workers who fall under the scope of their responsibility are up to standard, nor do they know if the leaders and supervisors of various teams are able to shoulder their work, and they neither care nor ask if problems have come up in the brothers and sisters' performance of their duties. In short, false leaders cannot resolve any problems in their work, yet they remain energetically busy. From the perspective of other people, false leaders are able to undergo hardship, willing to pay a price, and they spend every day rushing about. When it is time to eat, they need to be called to the table, and they go to bed very late. Yet the results of their work just aren't good. ... The most obvious consequence of a false leader having been at work for some time is that most people are unable to understand the truth, they do not know how to discern whenever anyone reveals corruption or develops notions, and they certainly do not understand the truth principles that should be upheld in doing their duties. Those who perform their duties and those who do not are all sluggish, unrestrained and undisciplined, and in disarray like scattered sand. Most of them may be able to speak a few words and doctrines, but while doing their duties, they only observe regulations; they don't know how to seek the truth to resolve problems. Since false leaders themselves do not know how to seek the truth to resolve problems, how can they lead others to do so? No matter what befalls

other people, false leaders can only exhort them by saying, ‘We must be considerate of God’s intentions!’ ‘We must be loyal in the performance of our duties!’ ‘When something happens to us, we must know how to pray, and we must seek the truth principles!’ False leaders often shout these slogans and doctrines, and it doesn’t yield any results at all. After people hear them, they still do not understand what the truth principles are, and they lack a path of practice” (The Word, Vol. 5. The Responsibilities of Leaders and Workers. The Responsibilities of Leaders and Workers (3)). Wendy’s behavior was just as God’s words exposed. She only focused on looking busy, going through the motions, adhering to formalities, and emphasizing spouting slogans, words and doctrines in doing duty. She didn’t immerse herself among the brothers and sisters, and failed to look into their actual states and difficulties, let alone seek the truth to resolve these issues. She was like a Communist Party official who issues commands from on high without truly understanding the people’s conditions. It was evident that she was a false leader who didn’t do real work. Later, the leaders held a gathering to discern Wendy’s behaviors according to God’s words. Everyone gained a clearer understanding of the principles for discerning false leaders. They realized that the criteria to determine whether a leader does real work isn’t how busy they appear or how loudly they shout slogans, but whether they can solve real problems and achieve genuine results in their work. In the end, everyone unanimously agreed to dismiss Wendy. Seeing this result, I felt very excited, but I also regretted not reporting her problems earlier. If I had reported them sooner, the losses to the church’s work could have been avoided.

Through this experience, I learned to discern false leaders better and I gained some knowledge of my own corrupt disposition. I saw how selfish and deceitful I had been, always protecting myself and even sacrificing the

church's interests to protect my own at critical moments. If these satanic dispositions in me were not resolved, I would surely be spurned and eliminated by God. I also corrected a fallacious viewpoint. In the past, I did not dare report things I couldn't perceive clearly, fearing my viewpoint wouldn't be comprehensive and that I would be held accountable if I reported something wrongly, as if I needed to be 100% certain and infallible before I could report anything to the upper leadership. However, by practicing this way, many false leaders, antichrists, evil people, and disbelievers won't be identified and dealt with in time, and by the time they cause significant losses to the church's work or commit all kinds of evil and provoke widespread outrage, it is too late to dismiss them or clear them out, and the damage will already have been done. I saw that my previous concern that "If I can't see something clearly, reporting it wrongly would cause disturbance and disruption" was ridiculous. It is also a cunning satanic philosophy for worldly dealings, and not in line with the truth principles. Through this experience, I truly felt that the house of God is governed by truth and righteousness, that false leaders and antichrists cannot stand in the house of God, and that the house of God particularly supports and upholds just acts of exposing and reporting false leaders. Only by being someone who practices the truth and protects the church's interests, can one be in alignment with God's intentions.

73. Choosing Between School and Duty

By Lu Yang, China

As far back as I can remember, my parents never got along. Fighting was just part of their routine, and sometimes my dad would hit my mom. Instead of getting a divorce, my mother put up with everything for years for my younger brother's and my sake. She spent half her life raising us, so I felt her love for us was truly great, and that when I grew up I had to honor her. My mother later accepted God's work of the last days and then shared the gospel with my younger brother and me. We'd often gather together to dance and sing hymns in praise of God, and I was so happy. But my mother didn't pursue the truth much and came to gather and read God's word less and less. A few years later, my father and mother still got divorced. Seeing that my mother, who was nearly fifty, hadn't had a good life, made me feel heavy-hearted. I promised myself that I'd study hard, find a good job, buy my mom a place to live, and let her live the rest of her life more happily. I felt that this was the filial piety I should observe. After this I gathered and read God's word much less, so I could focus on my studies. I devoted all my time and energy to my schoolwork.

In September 2019, I got into a vocational college in another province. I studied hard every day, hoping to move on to university and graduate school, so that I'd be able to give my mother a better life. But campus life really disappointed me. Those who were good at sucking up to the teachers earned their favor, and so their marks were always higher in exams, but those who were really capable didn't get as high grades if they weren't brown-nosers. Classmates who seemingly got along, chatting, laughing, and smiling together would backstab one another and turn into different people when their backs were turned. Some would even openly become someone

else's mistress without any sense of shame. Such campus life really depressed me and I couldn't bear to stay another day, but when I thought of how I'd promised my mom I'd study hard, make a difference in this world and not let her down, I had no choice but to stick it out.

When I came home for winter vacation, my aunt fellowshipped with me on God's word and showed me a video called **The One Who Holds Sovereignty Over Everything**. This video shook me to my core! It made me see God's almightiness and sovereignty, that He is the Master of mankind's fate, and that He has always guided mankind's development. I thought about the worsening disasters and the pandemic and about how God's work was nearly done, but because I was studying, pursuing knowledge, I wasn't doing a duty and couldn't even participate in church life. In the end, I wouldn't gain the truth, and would perish in the disasters and be punished. My aunt's fellowship on God's word helped me, supported me and warmed my heart. I understood that God had always been with me, and I wanted to attend more gatherings and do my duty in the church.

During my spiritual devotion one day, I read a couple of passages of God's word. Almighty God says: **"From the moment you come crying into this world, you begin to fulfill your duty. For God's plan and for His ordination, you perform your role and start your life's journey. Whatever your background, and whatever the journey ahead of you, no one can escape the orchestrations and arrangements of Heaven, and no one is in control of their own destiny, for only He who rules over all things is capable of such work. Since the day man came into existence, God has ever worked thus, managing the universe, directing the rules of change for all things and the trajectory of their movement. Like all things, man is quietly and unknowingly nourished by the sweetness and rain and dew from God; like all things, man unknowingly lives beneath**

the orchestration of God's hand" (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. God Is the Source of Man's Life). **"Not a single one of this humanity that God cares for day and night takes it upon themselves to worship Him. God only continues to work on man, for whom He holds out no expectations, as He has planned. He does so in the hope that one day, man will awaken from his dream and suddenly realize the value and meaning of life, the price God paid for all that He has given him, and the eager solicitude with which God waits for man to turn back to Him"** (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. God Is the Source of Man's Life).

Thinking over God's word, I felt very moved. I thought of how I'd accepted God's work of the last days with my mother when I was a child, but due to my studies I'd stopped going to gatherings and reading God's word, drifting ever further from God. Just when I thought my life was going to carry on like this, my aunt suddenly approached me to read God's word to me and show me a gospel video. It was clear to me that this had been arranged by God. My fate has always been in God's hands, and I have been living under His sovereignty and predestination. Even though I strayed from God along the way, He arranged for people and circumstances to awaken my spirit and bring me back into His house. I saw God's love and protection. I heard God's words once again and couldn't rebel against Him or hurt Him again. I wanted to truly believe in God and do the duty of a created being.

During that period, I would often wonder, "What is the true value and meaning of life? Could it really be the pursuit of diplomas and degrees?" Mulling over this question, I recalled the word of God: **"Once someone is mired in fame and gain, they no longer seek that which is bright, that which is just, or those things that are beautiful and good. This is because the seductive power that fame and gain have over people is too great; they become things for people to pursue throughout their lives**

and even for all eternity without end. Is this not true? Some people will say that learning knowledge is nothing more than reading books or learning a few things that they do not already know so as not to lag behind the times or be left behind by the world. Knowledge is only learned so they can put food on the table, for their own future, or to provide the basic necessities. Is there any person who would endure a decade of hard study just for the basic necessities, just to resolve the issue of food? No, there are none like this. So why does a person suffer these hardships for all these years? It is for fame and gain. Fame and gain are waiting for them in the distance, beckoning them, and they believe that only through their own diligence, hardships and struggles can they follow the road that will lead them to attain fame and gain. Such a person must suffer these hardships for their own future path, for their future enjoyment and to gain a better life. What on earth is this knowledge—can you tell Me? Is it not the rules and philosophies for living that Satan instills in man, such as ‘Love the Party, love the country, and love your religion’ and ‘A wise man submits to circumstances’? Is it not life’s ‘lofty ideals’ instilled into man by Satan, such as the ideas of great people, the integrity of the famous or the brave spirit of heroic figures, or the chivalry and kindness of the protagonists and swordsmen in martial arts novels? These ideas influence one generation after another, and the people of each generation are brought to accept these ideas. They constantly struggle in the pursuit of ‘lofty ideals’ that they will even sacrifice their lives for. This is the means and approach by which Satan uses knowledge to corrupt people. So after Satan leads people upon this path, are they able to submit to and worship God? And are they able to accept God’s words and pursue the truth? Absolutely not—because they have been

led astray by Satan. Let us look again at the knowledge, thoughts, and opinions instilled in people by Satan: Do these things contain the truths of submission to God and worship of God? Are there the truths of fearing God and shunning evil? Are there any of the words of God? Is there anything in them that relates to the truth? Not at all—these things are totally absent” (The Word, Vol. 2. On Knowing God. God Himself, the Unique VI). From God’s word I understood that Satan instills its ideas into people by having them constantly learn knowledge, and makes people want to stand out and bring honor to their family name. It convinces them that their fate is in their own hands and that knowledge can help them change it. By living their lives based on these ideas, people defy God, drifting further and further from Him. When we were studying, the teachers would often tell us, “If you want to do well, you’ll need a bachelor’s degree and postgraduate studies. Only these will prove that you’re capable.” After I accepted these ideas, I started to think of ways to improve my skills, joining competitions and preparing for professional certification exams. I thought I could change my fate like this. But in my blind academic pursuit and my single-minded drive to use my education and knowledge to stand out, my heart had slowly drifted from God. I stopped reading God’s word and rarely prayed. I was no different from a nonbeliever. Only then did I see that encouraging us to pursue knowledge is Satan’s way of corrupting and misleading us, and that the more we chase knowledge, the more we drift from God and resist Him. At the thought of this consequence, I began to re-evaluate and choose the path I was pursuing.

One day, I read a passage of God’s word: **“As members of the human race and devout Christians, it is the responsibility and obligation of us all to offer up our minds and bodies for the fulfillment of God’s commission, for our entire being came from God, and it exists thanks to**

the sovereignty of God. If our minds and bodies are not for God's commission and not for the just cause of mankind, then our souls will feel unworthy of those who were martyred for God's commission, and much more unworthy of God, who has provided us with everything"

(The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. Appendix 2: God Presides Over the Fate of All Mankind). Having read God's word, I was filled with a strong sense of responsibility. Man was made by God. Believing in God, worshiping God, and doing the duty of a created being are perfectly right and natural things to do. These are honorable things. God's intention is for us to spread His gospel, and bring more people before Him to accept His salvation. I was lucky enough to receive God's work first, so I should consider His intention and take on this responsibility. Failing to do one's duty is truly rebellious and makes one unworthy to live on this earth. Only by doing the duty of a created being can one be called human. Around that time, I heard a hymn of God's word, called **"What the Young Must Pursue."** There are a few lines in it that say: **"Young people should not be without the resolve to exercise discernment in issues and to seek justice and the truth. You should pursue all things beautiful and good, and you should obtain the reality of all positive things. You should be responsible toward your life, and you must not take it lightly"** (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. Words for the Young and the Old). God's words gave me a path of practice. As a person, I should pursue the truth, do the duty of a created being, and live a meaningful life. I had to be responsible for my own life. I didn't want to carry on studying. I wanted to do my duty in the church.

I later told my mom how I felt. She was furious. She said, "I've spent so much on your education over the years just to give you a brighter future so that when you graduate and get a good job, it'll reflect well on me. No matter what you say, I won't let you drop out of school. I'm only thinking

about what's best for you." Hearing my mom say this made me so angry. I didn't expect her to react like this. But at the same time, I felt conflicted, thinking about how much she had given me; it wasn't easy for her. If I chose to do a duty, I would disappoint her and feel indebted to her, but if I continued to stay in school and spend all my time and energy pursuing fame and gain and status, I'd feel guilty, and I didn't want to live that way, either. After inner battles, I still insisted on quitting school. Seeing I'd made up my mind, she agreed to come along for the withdrawal procedures. But at the school, my supervisor said to me, "Please think this through. In a year you'll have graduated, and once you have your degree you can do whatever you want. You need to know that finding a job is different for those with a degree and those without." Seeing I was unmoved by this, my mother said to me sincerely, "Won't you please stay in school? I've got such high hopes for you. You won't have to worry about money. I will always provide for your education. Your dad and I have divorced so you're the last support mom has. You're my only hope." My mother cried as she said this. Seeing my mother crying these tears of distress really got to me. I thought, "I'm only a year from graduating. Should I just finish my degree? If I start my duty after I graduate, my mother won't object." So I compromised and chose to stay in school. But while I was studying, I didn't have much time to do my duty, and I felt deeply guilty. So I prayed to God, "God, I'm so weak and don't know how to walk the path that lies ahead. Please guide me."

One day, I read a passage of God's word: **"Due to the conditioning of Chinese traditional culture, in Chinese people's traditional notions they believe that one must observe filial piety toward their parents. Whoever does not observe filial piety is an unfilial child. These ideas have been instilled in people since childhood, and they are taught in**

practically every household, as well as in every school and in society at large. When a person's head has been filled with such stuff, they think, 'Filial piety is more important than anything. If I weren't to observe it, I wouldn't be a good person—I'd be an unfilial child and I'd be denounced by society. I'd be a person who lacks conscience.' Is this view correct? People have seen so many truths expressed by God—has God demanded that one show filial piety toward their parents? Is this one of the truths that believers in God must understand? No, it is not. God has only fellowshiped on some principles. By what principle do God's words ask that people treat others? Love what God loves, and hate what God hates: This is the principle that should be adhered to. God loves those who pursue the truth and are able to follow His will; these are also the people that we should love. Those who are not able to follow God's will, who hate and rebel against God—these people are detested by God, and we should detest them, too. This is what God asks of man. If your parents do not believe in God, if they know full well that faith in God is the right path, and that it can lead to salvation, yet remain unreceptive, then there is no doubt that they are people who are averse to and hate the truth, and that they are people who resist and hate God—and God naturally abhors and hates them. Could you abhor such parents? They oppose and revile God—in which case they are surely demons and Satans. Could you hate and curse them? These are all real questions. If your parents prevent you from believing in God, how should you treat them? As is asked by God, you should love what God loves, and hate what God hates. During the Age of Grace, the Lord Jesus said, 'Who is My mother? And who are My brothers?' 'For whoever shall follow the will of My Father which is in heaven, the same is My brother, and sister, and mother.' These words already existed

back in the Age of Grace, and now God's words are even more clear: 'Love what God loves, and hate what God hates.' These words cut straight to the point, yet people are often unable to grasp their true meaning. If a person is someone who denies and opposes God, who is cursed by God, but they are a parent or relative of yours, they don't appear to be an evil person as far as you can tell, and they treat you well, then you might find yourself unable to hate that person, and might even remain in close contact with them, your relationship unchanged. Hearing that God hates such people will trouble you, and you are unable to stand on the side of God and ruthlessly reject them. You're always constrained by feelings, and you cannot fully let go of them. What is the reason for this? This happens because your feelings are too strong, and they hinder you from practicing the truth. That person is good to you, so you can't bring yourself to hate them. You could only hate them if they did hurt you. Would that hatred be in line with the truth principles? Also, you're bound by traditional notions, thinking that they are a parent or relative, so if you hate them, you would be scorned by society and reviled by public opinion, condemned as unfilial, without a conscience, and not even human. You think you would suffer divine condemnation and punishment. Even if you want to hate them, your conscience won't let you. Why does your conscience function this way? It's because a way of thinking has been sown within you since you were a child, through the inheritance of your family, the education given to you by your parents, and the indoctrination of traditional culture. This way of thinking is rooted very deeply in your heart, and it makes you mistakenly believe that filial piety is perfectly natural and justified, and that anything inherited from your ancestors is always good. You learned it first and it remains dominant, creating a

great stumbling block and disturbance in your faith and acceptance of the truth, leaving you unable to put God's words into practice, and to love what God loves, hate what God hates. ... Is man not pitiful? Do they not have need of God's salvation? Some people have believed in God for many years, but still have no insight into the matter of filial piety. They really do not understand the truth" (The Word, Vol. 3. The

Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. Only by Recognizing One's Own Misguided Views Can One Truly Transform). From God's word I came to understand that with the pervasive influence of traditional culture, "Filial piety is a virtue to be held above all else" had become my code of conduct. I thought filial piety was the most important thing and that if I wasn't observing it, I wasn't human. Thinking back on my childhood, I saw my mom suffered a lot and it couldn't have been easy for her, so I told myself I'd listen to her and not hurt her. My mom suffered so much to raise me, and if I couldn't honor or obey her, then I was ungrateful and conscienceless. So I resolved to study hard and make something of myself so that my mother could live a good life. I did everything she said so as not to hurt her. After I accepted God's work in the last days, I understood that doing duty and pursuing the truth were worthwhile and meaningful, but with my mom crying and begging me to stay in school, I compromised. To satisfy my mom's hopes, I wanted to fulfill my duty to satisfy God, but I couldn't achieve it. I'd been deeply trapped by the idea of "Filial piety is a virtue to be held above all else." God demands that we love what He loves and hate what He hates. These are God's demands of us and they are principles I should adhere to. If my parents truly believe in God, I should love them and treat them as brothers and sisters. But if they don't believe in God, persecute me or obstruct my faith, then they are averse to and hate the truth and are in opposition to God, and I shouldn't just blindly go along with what they say. My mother

believed in God but didn't pursue the truth and stopped me from doing a duty. She was simply a disbeliever and an enemy of God. I had no discernment before, and thought that, as their child, I should honor my parents and always listen to them, that this was having humanity and a conscience. Only then did I see that this mistaken view didn't conform to the truth. Honoring one's parents should accord with principles and not just be blind obedience. This is the principle of practice.

Later on, I read God's word that said: **"Now you should be able to clearly see the precise path that Peter took. If you can clearly see Peter's path, then you will be certain about the work being done today, so you will not complain or be negative, or long for anything. You should experience Peter's mood at the time: He was stricken with sorrow; he no longer asked for a future or any blessings. He did not seek profit, happiness, fame, or fortune in the world; he only sought to live the most meaningful life, which was to repay God's love and dedicate what he held utterly most precious to God. Then he would be satisfied in his heart. ... During the agony of his test, Jesus appeared to him again and said: 'Peter, I wish to make you perfect, such that you become a piece of fruit, one that is the crystallization of My perfection of you, and which I will enjoy. Can you truly testify for Me? Have you done what I ask you to do? Have you lived out the words I have spoken? You once loved Me, but though you loved Me, have you lived Me out? What have you done for Me? You recognize that you are unworthy of My love, but what have you done for Me?'"** (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. How Peter Came to Know Jesus). This is what the Lord Jesus asked Peter, but it felt

like God was asking me the same thing. I asked myself, “What have I done for God? Peter was able to give up everything to follow the Lord. But me? God gave me my life, but what have I done for Him?” I had done absolutely nothing for Him. All I’d ever thought about was my parents and my future. I’d even been willing to spend all my time and energy studying and earning money so I could repay their kindness. If I couldn’t live up to their expectations, I’d have felt that I’d let them down and be struck by guilt, but I hadn’t been doing my duty as a created being, and yet I didn’t feel like I was letting God down. I truly had no conscience! Thinking on Peter’s experience, though his parents stood in his way, he didn’t care about their opposition and gave up everything to follow the Lord Jesus. He was truly someone with conscience and reason. We are created by God, so it is perfectly natural and justified for us to believe in Him and worship Him. God chose me and brought me before Him, giving me a chance to be saved. God’s love is truly great! I had to repay God’s love and give up everything to follow God just like Peter. After this I read a couple more passages of God’s word that further inspired me. **“Awaken, brothers! Awaken, sisters! My day will not be delayed; time is life, and to seize back time is to save life! The time is not far off! If you fail the college entrance examination, you can study and retake it as many times as you like. However, My day will brook no further delay. Remember! Remember! I urge you with these good words. The end of the world unfolds before your very eyes, and great disasters rapidly draw near. Which is more important: your life, or your sleep, your food and drink and clothing? The time has come for you to weigh these things”** (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. Utterances of Christ in the Beginning, Chapter 30). **“Keep watch! Keep watch! Time lost will never come again—remember this! There is no medicine in the world that cures regret! So, how should I speak to you?**

Is My word not worthy of your careful, repeated consideration?" (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. Utterances of Christ in the Beginning, Chapter 30). Each of God's words spoke to the very heart of me. Time is running out now. Disasters are growing larger and countries around the world are in turmoil. The days are counting down one by one, and pursuit of the truth is crucial. If I didn't keep up with God's work and pursued carnal things, focusing on things like my studies, future, and family, then it would be too late to pursue the truth by the time God's work ended. Without the truth, I would perish in the disasters and be punished, and it'd be too late to regret. God's salvation had come to me once again and I had to grab hold of this opportunity, try my best to pursue the truth, and do the duty of a created being to repay God's love.

When I made up my mind to leave school, I said to my mom, "Mom, I'm not going back to school. I won't change my mind no matter what anyone says. I'm choosing my own path and I hope you can respect me." She said, "Your aunt has already said that once you graduate and get your degree, she'll arrange a job for you. She will find you a good boyfriend after that and you can live a happy life." But my mom's words couldn't persuade me anymore, because I now understood that the way she was treating me wasn't true love. She was just considering my immediate interests, not my life or my future destination. I then recalled a passage of God's word: **"Tell Me, from whom does everything to do with people originate? Who bears the greatest burden for human life? (God.) God alone loves people the most. Do people's parents and relatives really love them? Is the love that they give true love? Can it save people from the influence of Satan? It cannot. People are numb and dull-witted, unable to see through these things, and always say, 'How does God love me? I don't feel it. Anyway, my mother and father love me the most.**

They pay for my studies and make me learn technical skills, so that I can make something of myself when I grow up, be successful, become a star, a celebrity. My parents spend so much money to cultivate me and provide me with an education, scrimping and saving on food. How great a love is that! I can't ever repay them!' Do you think that is love? What are the consequences of your parents making you succeed, become a celebrity in the world, have a good job, and assimilate into the world? They endlessly make you pursue success, bring honor to your family, and assimilate into the evil trends of the world, so that in the end you fall into the vortex of sin, suffer perdition and perish, being devoured by Satan. Is that love? That is not loving you, that is harming you, destroying you" (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. To Gain the Truth, One Must Learn From the People, Events, and Things Nearby). Though it seemed like my mom was only doing things for my benefit, cutting back on meals and clothing and working herself to the bone for my schooling, little did she realize there were satanic poisons and fallacies in what I was learning that would make me drift further from God and deny His existence. Atheistic ideas taught in school, like "There has never been any Savior," "Man can create a pleasant homeland with his own hands," "One must endure the greatest hardships in order to become the greatest of men," and "Stand out above the rest, and bring honor to your ancestors," make us strive toward our ideals and try to stand out from the crowd to get ahead of others. People live by these ideas and views, trying to break from God's sovereignty and change their fate with their own hands. They end up opposing and denying God more and more, losing their chance to be saved. This is Satan's evil path. The pursuit of these things could only lead me further from God and into Satan's harm and corruption. It would push me toward hell! At this point, I saw clearly that my parents' love wasn't true love and that only

God's love is true love. Seeking to stand out and bring honor to one's family name is not the right path in life. Only pursuing the truth and doing the duty of a created being is the right path in life, and will result in God's protection from the great disasters. Once I understood all this, I decided to leave school and devote myself to a duty for God. So I told my mom, "Mom, you always want me to study, find a good job, find a good husband, and pursue social trends, but can you guarantee I'll be happy like this in the future? That I'll have a good fate? Nobody can! Mom, the most correct thing you have done in your life was to spread the gospel of Almighty God of the last days to us and lead me to the right path." My mom was silent for a moment and then said, "Look after yourself. Stay in touch." After that, I went and withdrew from the school. The moment I set foot outside the school, I was truly free. I was no longer constrained by my studies or family and could finally do my duty in the church.

This was all several years ago, but every time it comes to mind, I feel so fortunate. It was God's step-by-step guidance that allowed me to choose correctly between my duty and my studies, and to walk the right path in life. I truly felt God's love and earnest intent. I am now able to do the duty of a created being and my life is not in vain. I am truly happy.

74. Is Being Loyal to Others Being a Good Person?

By Yu Ming, China

In 2012, when I was a church leader, Zheng Xin drew in and misled some brothers and sisters so that he could contend for the leadership position, judging me as a false leader and calling for my removal, which led to chaos within the church. At that time, Wang Chen noticed what was happening and promptly reported it to me, and together, we fellowshipped with the brothers and sisters to discern and dissect the nature of Zheng Xin's actions. The brothers and sisters discerned Zheng Xin, and the chaos within the church finally subsided. From that moment on, I was grateful to Wang Chen. Without his help in bringing an end to the chaos, I really might have been suppressed and tormented, been ousted from my role, and lost my duty. In 2019, my wife and I were pursued by the police and couldn't interact with the brothers and sisters, losing touch with the church. It wasn't until 2021 that the brothers and sisters got in touch with me and transferred me to another church. The church leader who came to pick us up at the time was none other than Wang Chen, and he arranged for us to attend gatherings and start doing our duties. My gratitude for him deepened even further, and I felt that he had shown favor toward me. I regarded him as family, thinking to myself, "I don't know how I can thank him for this. I must properly repay him when I get the chance."

Later on, I was chosen as a church leader and was partnered with Wang Chen and Chen Mo. After a while, I noticed that Wang Chen was always over-analyzing people and things and fond of stirring up trouble. He clashed with Chen Mo and never reflected on or tried to know himself, and he even spread his prejudices toward and dissatisfaction with Chen Mo

during gatherings, causing the brothers and sisters to get caught up in the dispute, take his side, and judge Chen Mo. Moreover, he never practiced the truth, always interacting with others based on philosophies for worldly dealings. When the brothers and sisters faced difficulties in their duties, he didn't fellowship on the truth to resolve them, instead always considering their flesh and telling them not to be too hard on themselves, which caused them to indulge and accommodate their weaknesses. I also noticed that Wang Chen rarely asked about or checked up on the work, and he didn't resolve issues when he discovered them. If newcomers couldn't attend gatherings, he paid them no mind. He didn't properly arrange gospel spreaders, and to deal with the upper-level leaders, he resorted to trickery and lied to his superiors while hiding things from those below him. When the brothers and sisters pointed out his issues, he didn't accept them, making various excuses and trying to justify himself. He even spread negativity among the brothers and sisters, saying that he had suffered a lot in his duty over the years and gained nothing, and that it might be better not to believe in God and instead enjoy a worldly life of the flesh. At that time, some of the new believers were unable to discern him and were misled, no longer wanting to do their duties. During that period, Wang Chen continuously disturbed the church life, affecting all brothers and sisters in their duties. At that time, the upper-level leaders realized that Wang Chen was a false leader who didn't do real work and prepared to dismiss him. But through my interactions with Wang Chen, I realized that he was not just a false leader but also a disbeliever. His issues were serious, and he needed to be quickly dismissed and cleared out, or else he would continue to disturb the church life. I thought about reporting his disbelieving behaviors to the upper-level leaders. But then, memories of Wang Chen helping me calm the church chaos and arranging my duty flooded my mind, making me hesitate

in my heart, thinking, “If I report his problems, will he accuse me of not having a conscience and being ungrateful?” Thinking of this made my heart unable to find peace for a long while. If he were truly cleared out, it would mean the end of his faith journey, and he would surely resent me! I was really conflicted, and I couldn’t bring myself to write the report. I thought, “Maybe I should help him again? If he can change somewhat and stop causing disruptions and disturbances, maybe he won’t need to be cleared out?” With these thoughts, I refrained from reporting Wang Chen’s issues. When I saw Wang Chen again, I fellowshiped on God’s word with him, urging him to reflect on and try to know himself more when things happened to him. But no matter how I fellowshiped, he didn’t take it seriously and continued to disturb the church as he did before, preventing the brothers and sisters from having normal church lives and affecting their life entry. I felt awful and blamed myself, thinking, “How could I be so muddleheaded? Why can’t I stand on God’s side and protect the work of the church?” It was then that I began to seek the truth and reflect on myself.

One day, I came across a passage of God’s words: **“What characterizes feelings? Certainly not anything positive. It is a focus on physical relationships and satisfying the predilections of the flesh. Favoritism, defending other people’s shortcomings, doting, pampering, and indulging all fall under feelings. Some people place great stock in feelings, they react to whatever happens to them based on their feelings; in their hearts, they know full well this is wrong, and yet are still incapable of being objective, much less of acting according to principle. When people are always constrained by feelings, are they capable of practicing the truth? This is extremely difficult! Many people’s inability to practice the truth comes down to feelings; they regard feelings as especially important, they put them in the first place.**

Are they people who love the truth? Certainly not. What are feelings, in essence? They are a kind of corrupt disposition. The manifestations of feelings can be described using several words: favoritism, unprincipled protection of others, maintenance of physical relationships, and partiality; these are what feelings are” (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. What Is the Truth Reality?). After reading God’s words, I had an awakening. During this time, I had been living in my feelings and acting without principles. I had clearly realized that Wang Chen was not only a false leader who didn’t do any real work, but also a disbeliever. I should have exposed his behaviors to the upper-level leaders. However, I kept thinking about the favor he had shown me and caring about our so-called friendship, and so I didn’t report his issues, allowing him to continue doing evil in the church and disturbing the church life. I was acting based on feelings, shielding and covering for him. By wanting to keep a disbeliever in the church, I was colluding with Satan and becoming its accomplice. I was indeed doing evil! The great red dragon arrests, persecutes, and disturbs the church’s work, and here I was shielding a disbeliever within the church, doing what the great red dragon wanted to do but couldn’t. Wasn’t this rebelling against God and going against Him? I was acting as Satan’s shield! Through what the facts revealed, I finally saw how I was living based on feelings, unable to distinguish right from wrong or good from evil, devoid of any sense of justice and letting a disbeliever disturb the church life. I had been too rebellious against God! I remembered that God said: **“Feelings are His enemy”** (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. Interpretations of the Mysteries of “God’s Words to the Entire Universe,” Chapter 28). I felt deep remorse and self-reproach, and I decided to report Wang Chen’s issues to the upper-level leaders.

A few days later, when the upper-level leaders came to dismiss Wang Chen, I reported his situation. After verification, they found that Wang Chen was indeed a disbeliever, and they asked me to write down his behaviors to help compile his materials for being cleared out. When I thought of Wang Chen being cleared out, I couldn't help but remember all the times he had helped me in the past, and I thought, "He showed favor toward me, and now I'm about to write an evaluation to have him cleared out. If he hears about this, will he accuse me of repaying kindness with enmity and not having a conscience? How will I face him afterward?" But when I thought of his manifestations of being a disbeliever, my awareness of conscience told me I ought to stick to the principles and write down his behaviors. However, I couldn't get over this inner hurdle and felt I was in a dilemma. The more I thought about it, the more pain I felt, and I felt a darkness and dejection within. And so, after procrastinating more than 10 days, I still hadn't written about Wang Chen's behaviors. During this period, I suffered from a severe toothache, and sometimes it hurt so much that I'd start sweating. I didn't dare to eat and was unable to sleep. I realized that this might be God's discipline, and I prayed to God: "God, Wang Chen is a disbeliever, and I should write down his behaviors and clear him out according to the principles. But when I think of the favor he showed toward me, I don't want to write. My heart is too intransigent, too rebellious! God, I want to return to You. Please enlighten me and guide me to know myself, to stick to the principles, and to protect the interests of the church."

Afterward, I was constantly reflecting, thinking, "What was it that kept me from sticking to the principles and protecting the church's interests?" During a gathering, I found the answer in God's words. Almighty God says: **"In the depths of people's hearts, there are still many notions and**

imaginings, various thoughts, views, and poisons of traditional culture, and many things that are hostile to God. These things are hidden inside of them, yet to be unearthed. They are the origin of the revelations of their corrupt dispositions, and they come from within man's nature essence. That is why, when God does something that does not line up with your notions, you will resist Him and oppose Him. You will not understand why God has acted so, and though you know there is truth in everything God does and you wish to submit, you will find yourself unable to do so. Why are you unable to submit? What is the reason for your opposition and resistance? It is because there are many things within man's thoughts and views that are hostile to God, hostile to the principles by which God acts and hostile to His essence. These things are difficult for people to gain knowledge of' (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. Only by Recognizing One's Own Misguided Views Can One Truly Transform). **"I'm saying all this to make people realize that the root and essence of man's rebellious nature comes primarily from people's thoughts and views, which are formed by the education they receive from family and society, as well as from traditional culture. After these things are deeply planted in people's hearts bit by bit, through family convention, or the influence of society and academic education, then people start to live by them. They'll unconsciously start to believe that this traditional culture is correct, irreproachable, and cannot be criticized, and that only by acting according to the demands of traditional culture can they be real people. If they don't, they'll feel they're devoid of conscience, contrary to and without any humanity, and they won't be able to come to terms with it. Are these human thoughts and views not far removed from the truth? The things in human thoughts and views, and the goals people pursue, are all**

directed toward the world, toward Satan. God's requirement for man to pursue the truth is directed toward God, toward the light. These are two different directions, two different goals. Act according to God's goals and requirements of man and your humanity will become more normal, you will have more of a human likeness, and you will get closer to God. If you act according to the thoughts and views of traditional culture, you will lose more and more of your conscience and reason, become even more false and fake, follow the trends of the world even more, and become part of the forces of evil. Then you will be living completely in darkness, under the power of Satan. You will have entirely violated the truth and betrayed God" (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. Only by Recognizing One's Own Misguided Views Can One Truly Transform). God's words brought me clarity. I realized that I'd acted based on feelings and didn't want to document Wang Chen's behaviors for fear that he'd be cleared out mainly because I'd been bound and restrained by the ideas and viewpoints Satan had instilled in me, such as "One must be loyal," "One cannot be callous and ungrateful," "A kindness received should be gratefully repaid" and so on. Controlled by these ideas and viewpoints, I always put people's kindness first, even seeing it as more important than practicing the truth and the interests of the church. When I considered reporting Wang Chen's manifestations of being a disbeliever, I couldn't keep myself from remembering how he'd helped me in the past, thinking that reporting his behaviors was heartless and ungrateful and that I would be despised by others. Constrained by these ideas and viewpoints, I was never able to practice the truth or stand by the principles. Even when the leaders asked me to write down Wang Chen's behaviors, I hesitated because of the favor he had shown me, allowing him to continue doing evil and disturbing the brothers and sisters in the church. The church is a place

for the brothers and sisters to do their duties and pursue the truth. Only by promptly clearing out disbelievers from the church can the church life of the brothers and sisters be safeguarded. Writing about Wang Chen's manifestations of being a disbeliever was practicing the truth and a positive thing, but I perceived it as betrayal and not having a conscience. I really couldn't distinguish good from evil or understand what to love and what to hate, and I didn't have any principles or stance at all. If I had promptly reported Wang Chen's problems, he might have been cleared out of the church sooner, but because I didn't practice the truth and shielded him, it led to him continuing to disrupt and disturb the church, which brought losses to the brothers and sisters' life entry and also delayed the church's work. As a leader, not only did I fail to consider the lives of the brothers and sisters or protect the church's interests, but I also covered for Wang Chen based on feelings, showing loyalty and conscience to a disbeliever. I was biting the hand that fed me and offering help to an outsider, playing the role of Satan's lackey. Before, I had lived by the ideas and viewpoints that Satan had instilled in me, thinking I was being noble and loyal. Only now did I realize that these ideas and viewpoints are in opposition to God. They'd prevented me from practicing the truth, costing me my conscience and reason and stripping away my humanity. Living by these ideas and viewpoints, I could only do evil, resist God, and make God spurn and eliminate me. If it weren't for God's timely discipline in having me fall ill, I wouldn't have thought to reflect on myself. I couldn't continue rebelling anymore; I had to quickly return to God.

I read another passage of God's words that helped me change my fallacious views somewhat. Almighty God says: **"At times, God will use Satan's services to help people, but we must be sure to thank God in such cases and not repay kindness to Satan—this is a question of**

principle. When temptation comes in the form of an evil person bestowing kindness, you must first be clear about exactly who is helping you out and providing assistance, what your own situation is, and whether there are other paths you can take. You must deal with such cases in a flexible way. If God wants to save you, no matter whose services He uses to accomplish it, you should first thank God and accept it from God. You should not direct your gratitude solely toward people, to say nothing of offering up your life to someone in gratitude. This is a grave mistake. The crucial thing is that your heart is grateful to God, and you accept it from Him” (The Word, Vol. 6. On the Pursuit of the Truth I. What It Means to Pursue the Truth (7)). After reading God’s words, I finally understood that I had always seen Wang Chen’s help as human kindness. I hadn’t accepted this from God, recognized His sovereignty, or thought about how to repay God’s love. I was truly so muddleheaded! During the chaos in the church, Wang Chen helped me calm things down and later arranged a suitable duty for me. This was the duty and responsibility he ought to fulfill; it didn’t amount to kindness. Moreover, all this was orchestrated and arranged by God. I should have accepted this from God, thanked Him, and repaid God’s love, but I regarded God’s love for and protection of man as human kindness. I was so blind. Realizing this, I felt deep remorse, and I prayed to God, willing to repent and practice the truth to satisfy God.

Later, I found the principles of practice in God’s words and came to understand what constitutes a person with truly good humanity. Almighty God says: **“There must be a standard for having good humanity. It does not involve taking the path of moderation, not sticking to principles, endeavoring not to offend anyone, currying favor everywhere you go, being smooth and slick with everyone you meet, and making everyone**

speak well of you. This is not the standard. So, what is the standard? It is being able to submit to God and the truth. It is approaching one's duty and all manner of people, events, and things with principles and a sense of responsibility. This is plain for all to see; everyone is clear about this in their heart. Moreover, God scrutinizes people's hearts and knows their situation, each and every one; no matter who they are, no one can fool God. Some people always boast that they possess good humanity, that they never speak ill of others, never harm anyone else's interests, and they claim never to have coveted other people's property. When there is a dispute over interests, they even prefer to suffer loss than take advantage of others, and everyone else thinks they are good people. However, when performing their duties in God's house, they are wily and slippery, always scheming for themselves. Never do they think of the interests of God's house, never do they treat as urgent the things God treats as urgent or think as God thinks, and never can they set aside their own interests so as to perform their duties. They never forsake their own interests. Even when they see evil people committing evil, they do not expose them; they have no principles whatsoever. What kind of humanity is this? It is not good humanity. Pay no attention to what such people say; you must see what they live out, what they reveal, and what their attitude is when they perform their duties, as well as what their internal state is and what they love. If their love of their own fame and gain exceeds their loyalty to God, if their love of their own fame and gain exceeds the interests of God's house, or if their love of their own fame and gain exceeds the consideration they show for God, then are such people possessed of humanity? They are not people with humanity. Their behavior can be seen by others and by God. It is very difficult for such people to gain the truth" (The Word, Vol. 3.

The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. In Giving One's Heart to God, One Can Obtain the Truth). Previously, I always thought that those who repaid kindness and who valued loyalty were people with good humanity. Only after reading God's words did I realize that my view on things was quite absurd. A person of truly good humanity is one who shares in God's thoughts and concerns, has an honest heart, is an upright person, loves positive things, possesses a sense of justice, and can uphold the truth principles and understand what to love and what to hate. As for me, in an attempt to preserve my good image as a loyal person in the eyes of others, I didn't hesitate to harm the church's interests. I'd preferred to watch Wang Chen disturb church life and obstruct brothers and sisters' performance of duty rather than have him cleared out. How could I be called a person with good humanity? I was simply a person without humanity, someone selfish and despicable. Having realized this, I no longer thought that I had good humanity. Then, I came across another passage of God's words and gained some paths to practice. Almighty God says: **"By what principle do God's words ask that people treat others? Love what God loves, and hate what God hates: This is the principle that should be adhered to. God loves those who pursue the truth and are able to follow His will; these are also the people that we should love. Those who are not able to follow God's will, who hate and rebel against God—these people are detested by God, and we should detest them, too. This is what God asks of man"** (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. Only by Recognizing One's Own Misguided Views Can One Truly Transform). Reading God's words, I gained some understanding of His intention. God requires that people love what He loves and hate what He hates, that people take His side when things happen and uphold the truth principles. With brothers and sisters who sincerely believe in God and pursue the truth, when someone sees problems in their duties, they should fellowship with

them on the truth and support them with love and practice pruning them when necessary. As for the evil people, disbelievers, and antichrists, one should practice exposing and reporting them, shunning and rejecting them. Only such practices are in line with God's intention. Now that Wang Chen had been revealed as a disbeliever and someone of Satan's ilk, keeping him in the church would only disturb the church's work. I couldn't act based on feelings any longer; I had to put his disbelieving behaviors into writing and clear him out of the church as soon as possible. Afterward, I prayed to God: "God, You have shown me such favor and given me the opportunity to be a leader, yet I have not protected the church's interests in the slightest. I am willing to repent to You, to practice the truth and protect the church's work." After praying, I put Wang Chen's behaviors into writing. Upon investigation, the upper-level leaders found out that Wang Chen was indeed a disbeliever and cleared him out of the church. Seeing this outcome, my heart was at peace and happy, for I was finally able to practice the truth and consider God's intention.

Later, when the upper-level leaders analyzed the reasons for our poor work results, I was again reminded of all the times when I did not protect the church's work. As a church leader, acting based on feelings and allowing a disbeliever to remain in the church, causing a disturbance to the church life, was a transgression before God and a stain. As a church leader, I had failed to fulfill even my own duty and responsibility. Thinking of this, I felt guilty and blamed myself, thinking I was unworthy of being a church leader, and so I told the upper-level leaders that I was going to resign. After hearing this, the upper-level leader fellowshiped with me, saying, "God judges and exposes people to cleanse them of the satanic disposition within them that resists God, to let them have genuine repentance. This is God's earnest intention; do not misunderstand Him." I felt truly grateful to God.

When I was intransigent and rebellious, God had disciplined me through illness so that I could self-reflect, and now, once I'd shown some desire to repent, God had shown mercy on me, giving me the chance to continue doing my duty. I was deeply moved by this.

Through this experience, I have come to see that many of my views on things are not in line with the truth, and that I am in dire need of God's judgment and purification. During my future experiences, I wish to practice the truth more, pursue being a person who submits to God, and do my duty well.

75. What I Learned From Expelling an Evil Person

By An Xin, China

In April of 2021, I returned to my original church after being away and met Liu Min. Liu Min had nearly been expelled before because as a church leader, she not only failed to do real work but also promoted people based on her own will against principles, protected antichrists and evil people without handling them. This had resulted in the ineffectiveness of various church work. During that period, some brothers and sisters fellowshipped with her, but she refused to accept it. The leader at that time, Sister Wang Yi, assessed her behavior and suspected that she might be an evil person, but due to insufficient evidence, she concluded it might be just a temporary manifestation. After discussing with other leaders and workers, they decided to give her another chance to repent and to observe her. Thus, she was not expelled.

Once, while chatting with Liu Min, I asked her what lessons she had learned from that experience. I thought she would have some genuine understanding and repentance after such a significant failure and revelation. Unexpectedly, Liu Min said, “I was just prone to acting out of impetuosity. Besides, no one helped me at the time.” Hearing this, I thought, “Even though you weren’t expelled, it is a fact that you did evil things. Why don’t you reflect on yourself and learn from it?” Later, I found that not only did she fail to know herself, but she also distorted facts, and spread rumors wherever she went that made others believe she had been wronged and suppressed by Wang Yi. Unaware of the truth of the matter, the brothers and sisters believed her, thinking that Wang Yi was the problem. Later on, I was elected as a church leader. Not long after, I noticed

that Liu Min was neglecting her duty in favor of personal matters. I pointed out her irresponsibility and fellowshiped with her about God's words regarding the proper attitude toward one's duties. But she didn't accept this and even developed a prejudice against me. In gatherings she would repeatedly tell the brothers and sisters that I was too demanding toward her, misleading them with her words such that they too became prejudiced against me. This situation made me feel very constrained. I didn't dare to point out her problems so readily again, for fear she would keep picking on me and not let go. But Liu Min didn't stop committing evils. She seized on the news that a sister had been isolated for reflection by the church, distorting the facts to spread falsehoods by saying that the leaders and workers were arbitrarily expelling people and thereby ruining their lives. This created anxiety among the brothers and sisters and made them wary of the leaders and workers, plunging the church into turmoil. Seeing the severity of the situation, I realized that there was a problem. I thought about Liu Min's behavior, about how she consistently rejected the truth, and had a tendency to criticize others' actions and use them to take revenge on them. Not only hadn't she admitted her past evil doing after being dismissed from her position, but she kept seizing on this matter and wouldn't let it lie, passing judgment on Wang Yi at every turn, and claiming that she had been wronged; and when I had pointed out that she had been irresponsible in doing her duty, she had developed a grudge against me and distorted the facts to judge me behind my back, causing the brothers and sisters to become prejudiced against me. I also learned that when she was a leader, despite the emergence of a gang of antichrists in the church, she had not only failed to handle them, but had also asked the deacons to help these antichrists with love more, even demanding those who reported the antichrists to gain a better understanding of themselves and learn their

lessons. Moreover, after her younger sister had been dismissed for not doing real work, Liu Min had written to the upper leadership several times, grilling them on why her sister had been dismissed, even saying, “If anyone dismisses me from my position, I won’t go easy on them.” On finding this out, I thought, “Liu Min’s behavior is not just a momentary revelation of corruption; this is a problem to do with her nature essence!” I read two passages of God’s words: **“All who have been corrupted by Satan have corrupt dispositions. Some have nothing more than corrupt dispositions, while others are different: Not only do they have corrupt satanic dispositions, but their nature is also extremely malicious. Not only do their words and actions reveal their corrupt, satanic dispositions; these people are, moreover, the genuine devils and Satans”**

(The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. A Warning to Those Who Do Not Practice the Truth). **“No matter what mistakes they have made or bad things they have done, those people with vicious dispositions will not allow anyone to expose them or prune them. Should someone expose and offend them, they will become enraged, retaliate, and never let the issue drop. They have no patience and tolerance for other people, and do not exercise forbearance toward them. What principle is their conduct based on? ‘I would rather betray than be betrayed.’ In other words, they do not tolerate being offended by anyone. Is this not the logic of evil people? This is exactly the logic of evil people. No one is allowed to offend them. To them, it is unacceptable for anyone to trigger them in even the slightest way, and they hate anyone who does so. They will keep going after that person and never let the matter go—that is how evil people are”** (The Word, Vol. 5. The Responsibilities of Leaders and Workers. The Responsibilities of Leaders and Workers (14)). In light of God’s words, I saw that Liu Min’s nature was malicious and that she hated the truth. Not only did she

consistently protect antichrists and evil people, but she also often criticized others' actions to cause no end of trouble. She would rack her brains for ways to judge and retaliate against those who offered her advice or did things that endangered her interests. In doing so, she sowed discord within the church and caused disturbance to church life. Despite numerous attempts to fellowship with and help her, she still didn't repent. Based on her consistent behavior, I confirmed that she was indeed an evil person. After discussing with the other leaders and workers, we reported her situation to the upper leadership.

The upper leadership instructed us to start by isolating Liu Min to prevent further disturbance to church life, and to collect her materials. After that, we were to fellowship and discern her with the brothers and sisters, and then expel her. Hearing this, I had some concerns, thinking, "Last time, due to insufficient evidence, Liu Min wasn't expelled, and when she found out, she caused no end of trouble, and hasn't let up on Wang Yi ever since. When I pointed out her issues, she not only didn't accept it, but persistently distorted the facts to judge me. When her younger sister was dismissed, she even said that if anyone dismissed her, she wouldn't go easy on them. Liu Min's humanity is so evil; if she finds out she's been expelled, won't she kick up a huge fuss? Who knows what detrimental things she might do to me? Might she take revenge on me? She even knows where I live. What if she comes to my home in a fit of anger to quarrel with me, and causes a scene that my neighbors all learn of my faith, putting me in danger?" The more I thought about it, the more fearful I became. I didn't know how to face the impending situation. I prayed to God and asked Him to guide me. Later, I read a passage of God's words: **"Antichrists have extremely vicious dispositions. If you try to prune them or expose them, they will hate you and sink their teeth into you as if they were venomous snakes."**

You won't be able to swing or shake them off no matter how hard you try. When you encounter such antichrists, do you feel afraid? Some people do get scared and say, 'I don't dare prune them. They are so fierce, like venomous snakes, and if they wrap their coils around me, I'm finished.' What kind of people are these? They are too small of stature, they aren't good for anything, they aren't Christ's good soldiers, and they cannot bear witness to God. So, what should you do when you encounter such antichrists? If they threaten you or try to take your life, would you be afraid? In such situations, you must quickly unite with your brothers and sisters and stand up, investigate, gather evidence, and expose the antichrist until they are cleared out of the church. This is thoroughly resolving the problem. When you discover an antichrist and clearly identify that they have the features of an evil person and are able to punish and retaliate against others, don't wait for them to commit evil and gather evidence before you handle it. This is passive and will have already resulted in a few losses. It's best, when antichrists show that they have the features of an evil person and reveal their insidious and malicious disposition, and they are about to act, to handle, address, clear out, and expel them. This is the most sensible approach. Some people fear retaliation from antichrists and they don't dare to expose them. Isn't this foolish? You are unable to safeguard the interests of God's house, which inherently shows that you are disloyal to God. You're afraid that an antichrist might find leverage to retaliate against you—what's the problem? Could it be that you don't trust in God's righteousness? Don't you know that the truth reigns in God's house? Even if an antichrist manages to get hold of some issues of corruption in you and makes a fuss over it, you should not be afraid. In God's house, problems are handled based on the truth

principles. Making transgressions doesn't mean that someone is an evil person. God's house never handles someone because of a momentary revelation of corruption or occasional transgression. God's house deals with those antichrists and evil people who consistently create disturbances and do evil, and who don't accept even a smidgen of the truth. God's house will never wrong a good person. It treats everyone fairly. Even if false leaders or antichrists wrongly accuse a good person, God's house will vindicate them. The church will never clear out or handle a good person who can expose antichrists and has a sense of justice. People always fear that antichrists will find leverage to retaliate against them. But aren't you afraid of offending God and incurring His spurning? If you're afraid of an antichrist finding leverage to retaliate against you, why not seize the proof of that antichrist's evil deeds to report and expose them? In doing so, you will earn the approval and support of God's chosen people, and most importantly, God will remember your good deeds and acts of justice. So, why not do this? God's chosen people should always bear God's commission in mind. Cleansing evil people and antichrists away is the most crucial fight in the battle against Satan. If this fight is won, it will become an overcomer's testimony. Battling against Satans and devils is an experiential testimony that God's chosen people should have. It's a truth reality that overcomers must possess. God has bestowed so much truth upon people, has led you for such a long time, and has provided so much for you, for the purpose of you bearing witness and safeguarding the work of the church. It turns out, when evil people and antichrists do evil deeds and disturb the work of the church, you become timid and withdraw, fleeing with your arms over your head—you are a good-for-nothing. You cannot overcome Satans, you have not

borne witness, and God detests you. In this critical moment, you must stand up and wage war against Satans, expose the evil deeds of antichrists, condemn and curse them, giving them no place to hide and cleansing them away from the church. Only this can be counted as gaining victory over Satans and ending their fate. You are one of God's chosen people, a follower of God. You cannot be afraid of challenges; you must act according to the truth principles. This is what it means to be an overcomer. If you are afraid of challenges and make compromises because you fear retaliation from evil people or antichrists, then you are not a follower of God, and you are not one of God's chosen people. You are a good-for-nothing, inferior even to service-doers. Some cowards might say, 'Antichrists are so formidable; they're capable of anything. What if they retaliate against me?' This is muddled talk. If you fear retaliation from antichrists, where is your faith in God? Hasn't God protected you throughout so many years of your life? Aren't antichrists also in God's hands? If God does not permit it, what can they do to you? Moreover, no matter how evil antichrists may be, what are they really capable of? Isn't it all too easy for God's chosen people to unite and expose and handle them? So why be afraid of antichrists? Such people are good-for-nothings and are not worthy of following God. Go back home, raise your children, and live your life. In the face of antichrists disturbing the work of the church and harming God's chosen people, how should God's chosen people respond to their evil deeds? How should those who follow God stand firm in their witness? How should they fight against the forces of Satan and antichrists? Whether you submit and are loyal to God or sit on the sidelines and betray God will be fully revealed when antichrists disturb, do evil, and oppose God. If you are not someone who submits

to God and is loyal to Him, then you are someone who betrays Him. There is no other option. Some muddled individuals and those lacking discernment choose to take a middle-of-the-road stance and become fence-sitters. In God's eyes, these people lack loyalty to God and are betrayers of Him" (The Word, Vol. 4. Exposing Antichrists. Item Nine (Part Eight)). God's words say that exposing antichrists and evil people is the responsibility and duty of all of God's chosen people and that it is an actual manifestation of protecting church work. However, I was really afraid of exposing and handling evil people. I always felt that once I exposed them, they would coil around me like a poisonous snake and I wouldn't be able to shake them off. God's words say: **"They are too small of stature, they aren't good for anything, they aren't Christ's good soldiers, and they cannot bear witness to God."** I felt guilty and upset when I read the words **"they aren't good for anything."** As a church leader, I should have considered God's intention and protected the normal operation of church work and church life. But when I saw Liu Min spreading rumors and judgments everywhere that the leaders and workers were expelling people without principles, causing brothers and sisters to have prejudices and become guarded against the leaders and workers, and severely disturbing church life, I didn't have the courage to handle Liu Min according to principles. I feared she would latch on to me and retaliate against me, tormenting me and causing trouble for me. To protect my own interests, I wanted to act like a turtle, watching evil people disturbing the church but not dealing with it and protecting the church work in good time. I really didn't fulfill my responsibilities. I was so selfish and I was such a cowardly good-for-nothing! Especially when I read God's words: **"If you fear retaliation from antichrists, where is your faith in God? Hasn't God protected you throughout so many years of your life? Aren't antichrists also in God's hands? If God does not**

permit it, what can they do to you?” I felt even more ashamed. God is sovereign over all things, and antichrists and evil people are also in God’s hands. Without God’s permission, they can do nothing. I had believed in God and eaten and drunk so many of God’s words, yet I didn’t have true faith in God. I was truly pathetic! Thinking about this, I hated myself for being such a disappointment and made up my mind to consider God’s intention and rely on God in cleansing away this evil person. So, I prayed to God, asking Him to give me faith and strength so that I could stick to principles and not be afraid of this evil person.

Later, we exposed and dissected Liu Min’s behavior and isolated her. Liu Min did not accept this or reflect on herself at all and she even said that she had done these things because the brothers and sisters hadn’t helped her. She had no recognition of her evil deeds, let alone remorse. At that time, the brothers and sisters did not have much discernment about her. They thought Liu Min had some gifts, fellowshiped in a logical and clear manner, and that she was capable of enduring suffering and expending herself. They had a good impression of her. I felt troubled, thinking, “If I fellowship with the brothers and sisters and dissect Liu Min as an evil person, and they don’t accept it and disagree with her expulsion, what should I do? Will everyone think I handled things unfairly and develop prejudice against me? Will the church sink into chaos? If it does, will I be held responsible? Will I face dismissal?” At that moment, I realized I was living in a state of cowardice and concern again, so I prayed to God, willing to rebel against myself and practice the truth. Then, I sought how to fellowship with the brothers and sisters in a way that would achieve results. I read a passage of God’s words: **“The third requirement in the twelfth responsibility of leaders and workers is that when dealing with disruptions and disturbances caused by evil people, leaders and workers should eat and drink God’s word**

together with God's chosen people to reflect on and know themselves, and have a genuine turnaround. They should be able to lead God's chosen people to enter into the truth reality, cast off their corrupt dispositions, and achieve following God, submitting to God, and bearing witness to God. Only this kind of work aligns with God's intentions. For one thing, leaders and workers who work in this way are able to solve problems and equip themselves with the truth while working. Additionally, through fellowshiping the truth to solve problems, they help the brothers and sisters understand the truth, know how to reflect on and know themselves, cast off their corrupt dispositions, do their duties well, know how to discern and treat people, achieve following God and submitting to God, not be constrained by others, and be able to stand firm in their testimony. This is fulfilling the duties of leaders and workers; this is the principle that leaders and workers should practice for solving problems while carrying out the church's work. No matter what problems arise in the church, first and foremost, leaders and workers should seek the truth, grasp God's intentions, and seek God's guidance together. They should then look for relevant words of God to resolve the various existing problems. In the process of resolving problems, leaders and workers should fellowship more about the relevant words of God with the brothers and sisters, and understand the essence of the problems based on God's words. They should also have God's chosen people fellowship their own understanding to discern these issues. Once the majority are able to have the same understanding and arrive at a consensus, the problems become easier to resolve. In resolving problems, do not always repeatedly recount the events or pursue minor details or blame individuals involved in the problems. At first, do not focus on minor

issues; instead, clearly fellowship the truth, as this will reveal the nature of the problems. Only this approach helps God's chosen people learn to discern issues based on God's words, gain discernment from the people, events, and things that arise, and learn practical lessons from them. It also allows them to compare the words and doctrines they usually understand to real life, enabling them to truly understand the truth. Isn't this what the leaders and workers should do? ... How should church leaders lead God's chosen people? The main way is to lead God's chosen people to identify and solve problems in real life, to practice and experience God's word in real life, so that God's chosen people are not only able to practice the truth, but also able to discern negative things and negative people—false leaders, false workers, evil people, disbelievers, and antichrists. The purpose of discerning various people is to solve problems. Only by thoroughly resolving the disturbances caused by evil people and antichrists can the church's work progress smoothly, and God's will be carried out in the church. At the same time, addressing evil people also serves as a warning to avoid making mistakes or doing evil, enabling oneself to achieve fearing God and shunning evil” (The Word, Vol. 5. The Responsibilities of Leaders and Workers.

The Responsibilities of Leaders and Workers (20)). After reading God's words, I understood that one aspect of a leader and worker's responsibility is that when evil people and antichrists disrupt and disturb the work of the church, they should equip themselves and the brothers and sisters with the truth and learn lessons together, leading them to discern antichrists and evil people, and not to be misled and disturbed by them. At the same time, they should also guide brothers and sisters to understand the significance of the church's cleansing work. Only by cleansing away disbelievers, antichrists, and evil people can God's chosen people pursue the truth and fulfill their duties in a

stable environment. Understanding these things, I thought, “The brothers and sisters have no discernment about Liu Min right now, and some even worship her because they see her apparent gifts, and eloquence, but they don’t discern her essence based on the motives and nature of her actions, and her attitude toward the truth. I should lead the brothers and sisters to discern Liu Min’s behavior and actions according to God’s words, so they will no longer be misled. This is fulfilling a leader’s responsibility.” Then, I looked for truths about discerning people’s nature essence and I drew on Liu Min’s consistent behavior to fellowship with the brothers and sisters. After listening, they agreed to expel Liu Min. Some brothers and sisters even said, “Now I understand what God means when He exposes how evil people stubbornly refuse to repent, Liu Min is a living example.” Seeing this result, I was filled with gratitude to God, knowing it was the result of God’s words. Later, we fellowshiped together and saw that God allowing the church to have antichrists and evil people contains His good intention, using this real example of Liu Min to show us what evil people are like. This was much more practical than speaking empty words of theory.

Later, I also reflected on myself, wondering why I had become so fearful and hesitant to stick to principles when it came to expelling evil people? I read God’s words, which say: **“Until people have experienced God’s work and understood the truth, it is Satan’s nature that takes charge and dominates them from within. What, specifically, does that nature entail? For example, why are you selfish? Why do you protect your own position? Why do you have such strong feelings? Why do you enjoy those unrighteous things? Why do you like those evils? What is the basis for your fondness for such things? Where do these things come from? Why are you so happy to accept them? By now, you have all come to understand that the main reason behind all these things is**

that Satan's poison is within man. So what is Satan's poison? How can it be expressed? For example, if you ask, 'How should people live? What should people live for?' people will answer, 'Every man for himself and the devil take the hindmost.' This single phrase expresses the very root of the problem. Satan's philosophy and logic have become people's lives. No matter what people pursue, they do so for themselves—and so they live only for themselves. 'Every man for himself and the devil take the hindmost'—this is the life philosophy of man, and it also represents human nature. These words have already become the nature of corrupt mankind and they are the true portrait of corrupt mankind's satanic nature. This satanic nature has already become the basis for corrupt mankind's existence. For several thousand years, corrupt mankind has lived by this venom of Satan, right up to the present day" (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. How to Walk the Path of Peter). Thinking over God's words, I realized that the reason I hesitated and worried so much about expelling Liu Min was that I was controlled by Satan's poisons like "Sensible people are good at self-protection, seeking only to avoid making mistakes," "The less trouble, the better," and "Every man for himself and the devil take the hindmost," as well as "The bird that sticks its neck out is the one that gets shot." When things happened, I started by considering how to protect myself and ensure my interests weren't harmed. As a church leader, I had clearly discerned Liu Min's essence as an evil person, but I was afraid of offending her and her retaliating, and I worried that the brothers and sisters' lack of discernment would lead them to develop a prejudice against me again, and that if this happened, the church would sink into chaos and I might get dismissed and not be able to protect my status. No matter how I thought about it, I felt that exposing this evil person would be detrimental to me, so I shrank back and

didn't expel this evil person in good time. The church's cleansing work is done to purify the church, and ensure that the church work and church life are not disturbed. However, I couldn't uphold the church's work and watched on as brothers and sisters were misled, and as the church life was disturbed, I did nothing, feeling that as long as my interests were not harmed, things were fine. I saw that by living by these Satanic poisons, my conscience had become increasingly numb, and all I could think about was my interests. The more I thought about it, the more I felt that I was so selfish and despicable, that I had no loyalty to God, and that I was completely lacking in humanity! It was only then that I realized that relying on these Satanic poisons in one's actions was resisting God and disrupting the church's work as Satan's lackey. If I didn't repent, I would only commit more evils and eventually be detested and eliminated by God! Another concern I had about why I didn't stick to principles was that I might be dismissed if the church fell into chaos because I didn't handle this evil person properly. In my seeking, I read some of God's words: **"Those who can perform a duty in God's house must be people whose burden is the work of the church, who take responsibility, who uphold the truth principles, and who can suffer and pay the price. If one is lacking in these areas, they are unfit to perform a duty, and they do not possess the conditions for the performance of duty. There are many people who are afraid of taking on responsibility in performing a duty. ... They say to themselves, 'If this thing is mine to sort out, what if I end up making a mistake? When they look into who's to blame, won't they handle me? Won't the responsibility for it fall first to me?'" This is what they worry about. But do you believe that God scrutinizes all? Everyone makes mistakes. If a person whose intention is correct lacks experience and has not handled some sort of matter before, but they have done their**

best, that is visible to God. You must believe that God scrutinizes all things and the heart of man. If one does not even believe this, are they not a disbeliever? What significance could there be in such a person performing a duty?" (The Word, Vol. 4. Exposing Antichrists. Item Eight: They Would Have Others Submit Only to Them, Not the Truth or God (Part One)). After reading God's words, I understood that God is righteous, He scrutinizes everything, and the church handles people according to principles, based on their consistent performance and their nature essence. If someone's intention is to be considerate of God's intentions and uphold the church's work, and it's just a matter of them simply not understanding the truth and failing to see through the essence of a problem so they don't handle it well, and they are able to turn things around in good time through fellowship and help, the church will treat such people fairly and not handle or dismiss them. However, if someone deliberately causes chaos with bad intentions, the church will handle them according to principles. I didn't understand God's righteous disposition or believe that God scrutinizes people's hearts, nor did I believe that the truth reigns in the church. I just lived in my own notions and imaginings, worried and concerned. This was truly distorted! Understanding these things made me feel completely liberated. I also read that God's words say: **"You are performing your duty in the house of God now. What is the first principle of performing a duty? It is that you must first perform that duty with your whole heart, sparing no effort, and protect the interests of God's house. This is a truth principle, one that you should put into practice"** (The Word, Vol. 4. Exposing Antichrists. Item Eight: They Would Have Others Submit Only to Them, Not the Truth or God (Part One)). God's words showed me a path of practice. In the future, whenever I encounter matters, I must be considerate of God's intentions, practice

according to the truth principles, and uphold the church's work. This is fulfilling my duty.

Later, I went to expose Liu Min's evil deeds and announce her expulsion with a partnered sister. Although I still had some worries, I thought of God's words: **"All of you say you are considerate of God's burden and will defend the testimony of the church, but who among you has really been considerate of God's burden? Ask yourself: Are you someone who has shown consideration for His burden? Can you practice righteousness for Him? Can you stand up and speak for Me? Can you steadfastly put the truth into practice? Are you bold enough to fight against all of Satan's deeds? Would you be able to set your feelings aside and expose Satan for the sake of My truth? Can you allow My intentions to be satisfied in you? Have you offered up your heart in the most crucial of moments? Are you someone who follows My will? Ask yourself these questions, and think about them often"** (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. Utterances of Christ in the Beginning, Chapter 13). God's questions in His words include His expectations for people. God hopes that we can consider His intention, uphold principles, and have the courage to expose evil people. I couldn't disappoint God anymore. I had to practice the truth and uphold the church's work. So, I came together with my partnered sister in heart and mind and we prayed. Based on God's words, we exposed and dissected Liu Min's issues. Although she still didn't know herself, she had nothing to say. Seeing this result, I couldn't help but thank God in my heart. After this experience, I gained some faith in God and some understanding of my own corrupt disposition. I experienced the peace that comes from practicing the truth.

76. I Harmed Myself With Disguises and Deception

By Serena, South Korea

In September 2021, the church arranged for me to participate in the production of a new video project—a project which looked to be quite difficult. I knew that I was lacking in terms of principles and professional ability. So I studied hard, and when attending gatherings and discussing problems, I would always speak up actively, in the hope that others would see that my caliber was pretty good and think I was someone worth cultivating. But, before long, a series of problems began to arise one after another.

Once, when we were discussing the production of a video, I pointed out something that I saw as a problem. But, based on a principled evaluation, everyone else decided that it wasn't a problem after all. This made me feel discouraged, like I was no good. Another time, when I had a suggestion for a video, I thought about it for a long time before sharing my opinion. But I still didn't get it right. I regretted speaking afterward, thinking, "If I'd known people would've reacted this way, I wouldn't have said anything!" Before, when I'd been making simple projects, I was able to get the approval of my brothers and sisters more or less whenever I made a suggestion or voiced an opinion. But now, I couldn't even see problems clearly and was always making mistakes. Would the brothers and sisters think that my caliber isn't so good? If things continued like this, would they start to question whether or not I was fit to do this job? It looked as though I would have to be more cautious when making a suggestion or voicing an opinion in the future—if I wasn't sure about something, then it would be better to not say anything, and avoid making mistakes as much as possible,

so that the others wouldn't see the truth about how inept I was. But then, my worst fear came to pass. One day, I was fellowshiping at a gathering when the team leader suddenly interrupted me. He said that I had gone off-topic, and that my fellowship was supposed to revolve around God's words. I was so embarrassed—my face went red, and I just wanted to disappear into a hole in the ground. For the rest of the gathering I just kept my head down looking like a wilted flower. I felt ashamed, humiliated, and listless. From the start, my professional abilities were worse than everyone else's, and my view on issues was superficial. But now, I couldn't even articulate key points when I was speaking. What would everyone think of me now that I'd exposed so many deficiencies in such a short space of time? Would they think my caliber was poor? From that moment on, whenever we talked about work together I felt agitated, and got butterflies in my stomach. I wanted to make suggestions, but whenever I thought of one I reconsidered and didn't dare say it, for fear that if I made a mistake everyone would see that I wasn't up to scratch. I decided that it was better to say nothing than to say something wrong. So, when we were discussing problems, I stopped speaking altogether. Sometimes, I would find myself admiring the others, who always voiced whatever idea was on their mind. But I still couldn't bring myself to do the same—I didn't have that kind of courage. Actually, I knew that this was wrong. I felt uneasy and distressed, but I didn't know what to do. A while later, a leader of our church was dismissed. When the upper leaders exposed her performance, they mentioned that she had always tried to cover up her flaws and never opened up when doing her duty. Their words struck a chord with me, and I couldn't help but think of my own actions. Lately I'd been closing myself off, hiding my own ideas and viewpoints for fear that people would see through me. At that moment, I

realized how dangerous my state was, and I knew I had to seek the truth and resolve it promptly.

While I was seeking, I read a passage of God's words: **"Making mistakes or disguising oneself: which of these relates to disposition? Disguising is a matter of disposition, it involves an arrogant disposition, wickedness, and deceitfulness; it is especially loathed by God. ... If, having made a mistake, you can treat it correctly, and can allow everyone else to talk about it, permitting their commentary and discernment about it, and you can open up about it and dissect it, what will everyone's opinion of you be? They will say you are an honest person, for your heart is open to God. Through your actions and behavior, they will be able to see your heart. But if you try to disguise yourself and deceive everyone, people will think little of you, and say you are a fool and an unwise person. If you do not try to put on a pretense or justify yourself, if you can admit your mistakes, everyone will say you are honest and wise. And what makes you wise? Everyone makes mistakes. Everyone has faults and flaws. And actually, everyone has the same corrupt disposition. Do not think yourself more noble, perfect, and kind than others; that is being utterly unreasonable. Once people's corrupt dispositions and the essence and true face of their corruption are clear to you, you will not try to cover up your own mistakes, nor will you hold other people's mistakes against them—you will be able to face both correctly. Only then will you become insightful and not do foolish things, which will make you wise. Those who are not wise are foolish people, and they always dwell on their minor mistakes while sneaking around behind the scenes. It is disgusting to witness. In fact, what you are doing is immediately obvious to other people, yet you are still blatantly putting on a show. To others, it has the appearance of**

a clownish performance. Is this not foolish? It really is. Foolish people do not have any wisdom. No matter how many sermons they hear, they still do not understand the truth or see anything for what it really is. They never get off their high horse, thinking they are different from everyone else and more respectable; this is arrogance and self-righteousness, this is foolishness. Fools do not have spiritual understanding, do they? The matters in which you are foolish and unwise are the matters in which you have no spiritual understanding, and cannot easily understand the truth. This is the reality of the matter” (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. The Principles That Should Guide One’s Conduct).

After reading God’s words, I reflected on the state I’d been in lately. In the beginning, I thought that being selected to participate in a new video project meant that my caliber and ability were not too bad, and that I was worth cultivating. So, I actively expressed my opinions and engaged in fellowships and discussions, hoping to gain everyone’s approval. But, when I saw that I was constantly exposing my issues, I felt embarrassed. People were seeing through me, and I couldn’t accept that. I thought that my mistakes proved I wasn’t any good, that I wasn’t suitable for this job. So, I closed myself off and disguised myself, hoping the others wouldn’t see how inadequate I was. My disposition was so arrogant and deceitful! In reality, the fact that I’d been assigned to this duty didn’t prove I was any good to begin with—the church was simply giving me a chance to practice. In fact, I still had many deficiencies and shortcomings, and I had to learn and improve over the course of doing my duty. But I wasn’t treating these issues correctly. I wasn’t reflecting on the causes of my mistakes, and I wasn’t seeking the truth principles to make up for my deficiencies. Instead, I was racking my brains to try and find ways to hide my problems, so that the others wouldn’t see through me. How could I

have been so deceitful and ignorant? Later, I read more of God's words: **"When people do their duty or any work before God, their heart must be pure: It must be like a bowl of fresh water—crystal clear, without impurity. So what kind of attitude is correct? No matter what it is that you're doing, you are able to fellowship with others whatever is in your heart, whatever ideas you may have. If someone says that your way of doing things will not work, and they propose another idea, and if you feel it is a pretty good idea, then you give up your own way, and do things according to what they think. By doing that, everyone sees that you can accept others' suggestions, choose the correct path, act according to principles, and with transparency and clarity. There's no darkness in your heart, and you act and speak sincerely, relying on an attitude of honesty. You call a spade a spade. If it is, it is; if it isn't, it isn't. No tricks, no secrets, just a very transparent person. Isn't that a kind of attitude? This is an attitude toward people, events and things and it is representative of a person's disposition"** (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. Part Three). God likes honest people. I should do my duty with an honest attitude. No matter what I do or say, I should be forthright and open, saying what I think, and if problems appear I should be able to admit, and handle and solve them appropriately. So, I examined my mistakes from before one by one. I looked for the reasons why things had gone wrong, and sought to understand the related principles. Only then did I realize that making mistakes enables us to discover our own weaknesses and compensate for them in a timely fashion, which is a good thing. But I'd always been concerned with my own image and status, closing myself off, presenting a false front, not speaking my mind, and being afraid of exposing my flaws. By doing this, I would never be able to make up for what I lacked, and my progress would be slow. Wasn't I just digging a hole

for myself? After realizing this, I consciously began to correct my mentality. When discussing work with the other brothers and sisters or making suggestions for videos, I voiced whatever viewpoint was on my mind without trying to guess how it would be received. Although some of my ideas and opinions were still off-base, thanks to my brothers' and sisters' corrections and guidance, I began to understand some of the principles that were involved. Slowly, I became less constrained and felt more at ease, and my heart grew lighter.

After a while, we had to adopt some new technology in order to improve the video quality. I was new to the technology, but by discussing and learning the necessary skills together with others, I gradually started to understand it somewhat. When I saw how my partnered sister communicated her ideas and made suggestions, how her analysis was always logical and well-founded, and how the supervisor would often ask for her opinion on various things, I felt very envious. I, on the other hand, was still a nobody. I wondered when everyone would finally know who I was. Sometimes, during work discussions, I thought about how to use my words so that others would have a good impression of me—so they'd know I wasn't totally clueless about the matter at hand. One day, we were all discussing a video production plan when I noticed a problem. In order to speak concisely and to the point, and to show that I knew a little something about this new technology, I wanted to choose my words carefully before speaking. But the more I fretted over it, the less I knew what to say. In the end, my partnered sister raised the issue for me instead. Later on, I thought of a solution. My partnered sister and I could discuss what to say beforehand. Then, I would fellowship my viewpoint to the others first at the meeting. This way, I would be able to express myself better, and I'd feel like I had a sense of presence in our team. The problem was that, when I

participated in discussions alone, I still didn't dare put my views out there. Instead, I'd wait for everyone else to finish expressing their opinions, then offer up a single "Okay," while pretending I understood what had been said. This continued to the point where I wasn't taking on any burden when discussing problems. As I listened to them talking, I would sometimes zone out, or even doze off.

One day, my partnered sister came to me and remarked that I hadn't been doing my duty as actively as before. She asked me if I was in a particular state, and I opened up to her about my recent revelations. She used her experience to help me, and sent me some of God's words, which say: **"Antichrists believe that if they talk too much, constantly expressing their views and fellowshiping with others, everyone will see through them; they will think the antichrist lacks depth, is just an ordinary person, and won't respect them. What does losing respect mean to the antichrist? It means the loss of their esteemed status in the hearts of others, appearing mediocre, ignorant, and ordinary. This is what antichrists do not hope to see. Therefore, when they see others in the church always opening up and admitting their negativity, rebellion against God, the mistakes they made yesterday, or the unbearable pain they feel from not being honest today, the antichrist considers these people foolish and naive, as they never admit such things themselves, keeping their thoughts hidden. Some people speak infrequently because of poor caliber or simple-mindedness, a lack of complex thoughts, but when antichrists speak infrequently, it's not for the same reason; it's a problem of disposition. They rarely speak when meeting others and don't readily express their views on matters. Why don't they express their views? Firstly, they certainly lack the truth and can't see through things. If they speak, they might make mistakes and be seen through**

themselves; they fear being looked down upon, so they pretend to be silent and feign profundity, making it hard for others to gauge them, appearing wise and distinguished. With this facade, people dare not underestimate the antichrist, and seeing their seemingly calm and composed exterior, they hold them in even higher regard and dare not slight them. This is the devious and wicked aspect of antichrists. They don't readily express their views because most of their views are not in line with the truth, but are merely human notions and imaginings, not worthy of being brought out into the open. So, they remain silent. ... They don't want to be seen through, knowing their own limitations; but behind this there is also a despicable intention—to be admired. Isn't this what's most disgusting?" (The Word, Vol. 4. Exposing Antichrists. Item Six). In the past, when I read God's words exposing the dispositions of antichrists, I almost never looked at myself through His words. I thought that I didn't have any status, let alone any over-ambitious desires. But now, comparing myself with God's words, I saw that antichrists were often reluctant to express their views in order to cover up their own shortcomings, and that they often stayed silent in order to feign profundity. This is so that everyone around them mistakenly thinks they understand the truth, and looks up to them. Isn't that what I was doing? In truth, I didn't have a handle on this new technology at all. But in order to save face and have a firm footing within the group, I never openly talked about my shortcomings or inadequacies. I'd put up a false front, pretending to understand things and not daring to share my opinions in front of everyone, for fear that I'd misspeak and they'd see I was a layman. I even went as far as to cover up my deficiencies by rushing to suggest things in meetings which I'd previously discussed with my partnered sister. Not only did it allow me to feel more like I was a part of things, but it stopped the others from figuring

out how low my standard truly was. I was so deceitful! Thinking back, I realized that a lot of people had mentioned that I wasn't very talkative. I used to think that this was just due to my personality. It was only through the exposure of God's words that I saw I was keeping quiet to prevent others from seeing through me. I had acted like this before, too, when I did my duty. Sometimes I'd discover some problems, but hold back from saying anything if they weren't clear to me yet. Instead, I'd wait until I understood the problem clearly, then methodically and logically explain my viewpoint. By doing this, over time everyone thought I had an eye for spotting problems, and I'd occasionally hear them praise me for being clever and of high caliber. It made me feel very pleased with myself. When I saw how some of my other sisters were forthright, saying what they thought and admitting when they didn't understand something, I'd look down on them. I thought that they spoke without thinking things through, and that the others would instantly see how inept they were. I knew I couldn't act this way. Now that I realized all of this, I knew that my antichrist disposition was severe. I'd been putting up a false front in order to obtain status and make others have a high opinion of me. I was too concerned with status, and thought too highly of myself. I constantly wanted to be a person with no shortcomings, and was unwilling to be an ordinary person. It was truly arrogant and irrational of me. I thought about my participation in these complex video projects. Not only did I have the chance to enhance my professional abilities, but I could understand more principles in the process. That was a great thing! But instead of working hard to learn new skills and principles with my brothers and sisters, I'd spent my days disregarding my duty. I'd been thinking in crooked ways, worrying about gaining and losing the praise of others, and trying my best to protect my own image. I'd been so foolish! After believing in God for so

many years, I still didn't know where I should focus my pursuits. I'd carelessly wasted so much precious time, and in the end, I'd gained nothing from it. Not only was I not doing my duty well, I was also despised and disgusted by God. The more I thought about it, the worse I felt. I was ashamed of myself. So, I prayed to God, willing to repent.

After that, I found a path of practice from God's words. God says: **"How do the words and deeds of normal people appear? A normal person can speak from their heart. They will say whatever is in their heart without any falsehood or deceit. If they can understand a matter they encounter, they will act according to their conscience and reason. If they cannot see through it clearly, they will make mistakes and fail, they will entertain misconceptions, notions, and their personal imaginings, and they will be blinded by the illusions before their eyes. These are the outward signs of normal humanity. Do these outward signs of normal humanity satisfy the requirements of God? No. People cannot satisfy God's requirements if they do not have the truth. These outward signs of normal humanity are the possessions of an ordinary, corrupt man. These are the things man is born with, the things native to him. You have to allow yourself to show these outward signs and revelations. While allowing yourself to show these outward signs and revelations, you must understand that such are man's natural instincts, caliber, and inborn nature. What should you do once you understand this? You should regard it correctly. But how do you put this correct regard into practice? This is done by reading more of God's words, further equipping yourself with the truth, bringing things that you don't understand, things about which you entertain notions, and things about which you may make wrong judgments to God more often to reflect on them and seek the truth in order to solve all your problems.**

... As you are not a superman, nor a great man, you cannot penetrate and understand all things. It is impossible for you to see through the world at a glance, see through humankind at a glance, and see through everything happening around you at a glance. You are an ordinary person. You must undergo many failures, many periods of bewilderment, many errors of judgment, and many deviations. This can fully reveal your corrupt disposition, your weaknesses and deficiencies, your ignorance and foolishness, enabling you to reexamine and know yourself, and to have knowledge of God's almightiness, full wisdom, and His disposition. You will gain positive things from Him, and come to understand the truth and enter reality. There will be much amid your experience that does not go as you wish, against which you will feel powerless. With these, you must seek and wait; you must gain from God the answer to each matter, and understand from His words the underlying essence of each matter and the essence of each sort of person. This is how an ordinary, normal person behaves. You must learn to say, 'I can't,' 'It's beyond me,' 'I can't penetrate it,' 'I haven't experienced it,' 'I don't know anything at all,' 'Why am I so weak? Why am I so good for nothing?' 'I am of such poor caliber,' 'I'm so numb and dull-witted,' 'I'm so ignorant that it will take me several days before I can understand this thing and take care of it,' and 'I need to discuss this with someone.' You must learn to practice in this way. This is the outward sign of your admission that you are a normal person and your desire to be a normal person" (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. Treasuring God's Words Is the Foundation of Belief in God). After pondering God's words, I understood that I was an ordinary person of average caliber, with little experience and little understanding of the truth principles. When faced with a new piece of technology and new problems,

sometimes I couldn't understand things or made mistakes—but this was normal. I had to admit and accept my own shortcomings and deficiencies, and seek the truth principles to resolve the issue. Only by doing this would I be able to continuously improve. After realizing all this, my mind was illuminated. I was willing to practice in accordance with God's demands, to stop pretending and being deceptive, to conduct myself and do my duty in a down-to-earth manner.

There was a time when a group of us were discussing how to fix a video with our supervisor. After everyone had given their suggestions, I found another problem—but I wasn't sure if I was right or not, and I had some concerns. I thought, "Should I mention it, or not? If I raise an issue that isn't really a problem, it'll expose me as being ignorant and dense." Just then, I realized I wanted to wrap myself up and disguise myself again to save face. So, I prayed to God, asking Him for the strength to rebel against my wrong intention, and then opened up to the others about my views. The supervisor and the other sisters also offered their opinions. Although the matter I'd raised turned out not to be a concern, through our discussion I came to have a clearer understanding of the principles. Over time, when communicating and discussing work together, I grew less anxious and apprehensive. Sometimes I could notice some problems, but I was not sure how to resolve them. So I shared the problems honestly with others and let everyone work out how to resolve them together. Sometimes I proposed a solution, but it was discovered to be unsuitable through the course of discussion. At times like this, I admitted that I was wrong, and discussed with everyone how to fix it to achieve better results. ... When I practiced like this, my heart felt much calmer and more relaxed, and I was able to do my small part in my duty. I've learned through personal

experience that conducting myself and doing my duty this way makes me feel peaceful, at ease, and liberated!

77. I No Longer Struggle to Collaborate Well

By Jessica, Japan

Over the past few years, I've been watering newcomers from a foreign country in the church. Since I had experience with watering work and spoke a little of their language, brothers and sisters often asked me for help when they had problems related to watering newcomers, and they usually accepted my suggestions. Sometimes, the brothers and sisters didn't know how to resolve some of the newcomers' problems, but I could easily resolve them. Therefore, I believed that my caliber was good and my working abilities were above average. Soon, I was elected as a supervisor and was responsible for arranging and making final decisions on matters small and large in the watering work. I enjoyed this feeling very much.

Later, as the number of newcomers who needed watering increased, the church arranged for a sister named Emily to collaborate with me and share responsibility for the work. During our first gathering, Emily discussed her ideas and opinions on the existing problems in the watering work. The brothers and sisters all agreed with her, but I felt uncomfortable. I hadn't expected that, despite doing this duty for a short time, Emily was quite insightful with regard to professional matters. Before she joined us, everyone would listen to me during discussions, but now, she had shown up and stolen the limelight from me. In the future, once she had spent a long time with the brothers and sisters, showcasing more of her strengths and advantages, everyone would definitely hold her in high regard, which would jeopardize my status within the group. The more I dwelled on this, the more worried I was. One day, the leader reviewed the work together with us. He noticed that the newcomers Emily watered were gathering fairly normally, and many were doing their duties, while many of the

newcomers I watered were not gathering normally, and few were doing their duties. Seeing this situation, the leader asked me to assign some of the work I was responsible for to Emily. When I heard this, I felt overwhelming resistance in my heart, thinking, “Although the results of the work I’m in charge of aren’t too good, if I just put in more effort, these issues will all see improvement and be resolved sooner or later. Why should I assign my work to Emily? If the brothers and sisters learn about this, what will they think of me? They will surely think that my working abilities are not up to par. How could I remain in the group then? Moreover, if Emily gets involved in the work I’m responsible for and everyone starts listening to her, who will listen to me? Wouldn’t that turn me from a supervisor into a figurehead?” But the leader had already made this arrangement and I could not reject him outright, so I reluctantly assigned some less important tasks to Emily. I usually wouldn’t proactively meet with her to discuss the work, and sometimes when she sent me messages, I was unwilling to respond after reading them.

Soon after, I learned that a brother named Hunter was in a bad state, so I prepared to support and help him, but unexpectedly, Emily told me she had already fellowshiped with Hunter. I was a bit upset, thinking, “I have always been the one who fellowshiped with Hunter, and now you went and fellowshiped with him without mentioning it to me; isn’t it clear that you’re trying to compete with me?” Especially when Hunter said during a gathering that Emily’s fellowship was very beneficial to him and helped him gain some understanding of his corrupt disposition, I felt extremely uncomfortable. I thought, “Hunter once mentioned that my fellowships contained lots of doctrines, while now he admires Emily for pointing out his problems in her fellowship. If things go on like this, won’t it be obvious which one of us is better? Everyone will surely think Emily understands the

truth and has reality, and they'll think more highly of her in the future. Won't that endanger my status in the group?" From then on, I saw Emily as my biggest threat. I became very protective of the work I was directly responsible for, not giving her any chances to participate. The leader typically asked us to discuss work together, but I was unwilling to involve her, feeling that it would be degrading and make me look incompetent. Hadn't I been managing this work just fine without her? So, I made excuses and refused her participation, telling the leader that I had already handled things, or that the issues were not that complicated and I could solve them alone, that discussing things further with Emily would just hold things up, and so on. I made all sorts of excuses to exclude her from my work. One time, I had just finished talking to a sister named Joan about her work situation when Emily went to ask her about the same thing. Joan felt a bit annoyed, saying that repeatedly communicating about the work felt a little like a waste of time. I knew very well that this was because I hadn't communicated properly with Emily beforehand, but instead of reflecting on my problem, I was secretly delighted, thinking, "Exactly! Involving Emily is indeed redundant. If everyone dislikes her, then she won't be a threat to my status anymore." So, I went along with Joan and said, "It really does hold things up a bit." During work discussions, when some brothers and sisters suggested having Emily get involved, I had no choice but to agree so as to save face. But on the inside, I was extremely unwilling. I thought, "Emily, Emily! Now she's the only one you care about. Is it impossible to proceed with the work without her? Before she joined us, I was the one making decisions, and the work was not delayed at all!" Every time I heard the brothers and sisters mention Emily's name, I became particularly sensitive, wondering if they all thought highly of her. As soon as she was around, I immediately became guarded, like a hedgehog with its spines up,

ready to defend my status at any moment. Due to my efforts to obstruct her, Emily couldn't integrate into the work at all and had no idea how to collaborate with me, which made her very upset. I realized that her poor state had a lot to do with me, and I felt a prick of guilt. However, I then thought, "If you can't integrate, then stay out of my work. It'd be nice if we could each do our own thing and not interfere with each other." I even wished that God would arrange the circumstances for Emily to be reassigned elsewhere so that I could have peace of mind. During that time, I lived in a state of resistance and exclusion toward Emily, often feeling inexplicably irritable and tired. I became increasingly negative, and my heart grew darker. I prayed to God, "Oh God, ever since I started collaborating with Emily, I've always wanted to compete with her and worried that she might overtake me. I know this state is not right, but I cannot see through the essence of my problem. Please enlighten me so that I can understand myself."

One day, I read a passage of God's words that exposed antichrists and gained some understanding of myself. Almighty God says: **"One of the most obvious characteristics of the essence of an antichrist is that they monopolize power and run their own dictatorships: They do not listen to anyone, they do not respect anyone, and regardless of people's strengths, or what correct views or wise opinions they may express, or what suitable methods they might put forward, they pay them no heed; it is as if no one is qualified to cooperate with them, or to take part in anything they do. This is the kind of disposition antichrists have. Some people say this is being of bad humanity—but how could it be commonplace bad humanity? This is an entirely satanic disposition, and such a disposition is supremely vicious. Why do I say that their disposition is supremely vicious? Antichrists expropriate everything**

from the house of God and the property of the church, and treat them as their personal property, all of which is to be managed by them, and they do not permit anyone else to intervene in this. The only things they think about when doing the work of the church are their own interests, their own status, and their own pride. They do not allow anyone to harm their interests, much less do they allow anyone of caliber or anyone who is able to speak of their experiential testimony to threaten their reputation and status. And so, they try to suppress and exclude as competitors those who are able to speak of experiential testimony, and who can fellowship the truth and provide for God's chosen people, and they desperately try to isolate those people completely from everyone else, to drag their names thoroughly through the mud, and to bring them down. Only then will the antichrists feel at peace. ... In fact, these people have some experiential testimony and possess some of the truth reality. They are of relatively good humanity, have conscience and reason, and are able to accept the truth. And though they may have some shortcomings, deficiencies, and occasional revelations of a corrupt disposition, they are capable of reflecting on themselves and repenting. These people are the ones whom God will save, and who have hope of being made perfect by God. In sum, these people are suited to doing a duty. They satisfy the requirements and principles for doing a duty. But the antichrists think to themselves, 'There's no way I'm going to put up with this. You want to have a role in my domain, to compete with me. That's impossible; don't even think about it. You're more educated than me, more articulate than me, more popular than me, and you pursue the truth with greater diligence than I do. If I were to cooperate with you and you stole my thunder, what would I do then?' Do they consider the interests of the house of God? No" (The Word, Vol. 4. Exposing

Antichrists. Item Eight: They Would Have Others Submit Only to Them, Not the Truth or God (Part One)). God exposes that antichrists attach particular importance to status and power, not allowing anyone to harm their interests. If they see someone better than themselves threatening their status, they suppress and exclude that person. Comparing this to my behavior, I realized I was acting just like an antichrist. Seeing that Emily not only fellowshipped on the truth and resolved problems better than I did, but also was quite insightful when it came to our profession, I worried that collaborating with her would prevent me from showing myself off. Therefore, I excluded her and refused to let her take part in my work, all to protect my status and avoid having to distribute my power. The leader arranged for Emily and me to divide the work up and collaborate with each other, which was done in consideration of the watering work's results. However, I resisted this in my heart. Even if I reluctantly agreed to involve her, I only gave her some less important tasks, afraid that if everyone listened to her I'd lose my status in the group. When Hunter's state was poor, Emily promptly fellowshipped with him to resolve it, but instead of being pleased, I made all sorts of excuses to suppress her in order to protect my status, and prevent her from getting involved in the work I was responsible for. When Joan was critical of Emily, I covertly rejoiced, hoping everyone would become biased against her so that she would no longer constitute a threat to my status. Because of my exclusion, Emily couldn't get involved in the work I was responsible for, which affected her state. I didn't reflect on myself, instead wishing she would leave immediately. I was so autocratic, with such a strong desire for status. To maintain my status and power, I excluded and suppressed Emily in everything I did without considering the church work at all. I was really so selfish and despicable, and I had no humanity. My behavior was the precise manifestation of an antichrist's disposition!

Later, I read another passage of God's words which helped me gain some understanding about the consequences of my actions. God's words say: **"When people have satanic dispositions, they can rebel against and oppose God in any time and at any place. People who live by satanic dispositions can deny, oppose, and betray God at any time. The antichrists are very stupid, they don't realize this, they think, 'I had enough trouble getting hold of power, why would I share it with anyone else? Giving it to others means I won't have any for myself, doesn't it? How can I demonstrate my talents and abilities without power?' They do not know that what God has entrusted people with is not power or status, but a duty. Antichrists only accept power and status, they put their duties aside, and they don't do actual work. Instead, they only pursue fame, gain and status, and only want to seize power, control God's chosen people, and indulge in the benefits of status. Doing things this way is very dangerous—this is opposing God! Anyone who pursues fame, gain and status rather than properly doing their duty is playing with fire and playing with their life. Those who play with fire and their lives can doom themselves at any moment. Today, as a leader or a worker, you are serving God, which is no ordinary thing. You are not doing things for some person, much less working to pay bills and put food on the table; instead, you are performing your duty in the church. And given, in particular, that this duty came from God's commission, what does performing it imply? That you are accountable to God for your duty, whether you do it well or not; ultimately, an account must be given to God, there must be an outcome. What you have accepted is God's commission, a hallowed responsibility, so no matter how important or minor this responsibility is, it is a serious business. How serious is it? On a small scale it involves whether you can gain the truth**

in this lifetime and it involves how God views you. On a larger scale, it directly relates to your prospects and destiny, to your outcome; if you commit evil and oppose God, you will be condemned and punished. Everything you do when you perform your duty is recorded by God, and God has His own principles and standards for how it is scored and evaluated; God determines your outcome based on all that is manifested by you as you perform your duty” (The Word, Vol. 4. Exposing

Antichrists. Item Eight: They Would Have Others Submit Only to Them, Not the Truth or God (Part One)). God’s words clearly explain the consequences of antichrists pursuing status. Antichrists do not pursue the truth, only pursuing reputation and status; they hold power and status above all else, grasping onto power and refusing to let go, wanting to be the sole authority and not allowing anyone else to take part in their work. Ultimately, they are revealed and eliminated for resisting God. Thinking of myself, after being elected as the supervisor of the watering work, I called all the shots on work matters small and large. Everyone came to me to ask about their issues and listened to me, and I particularly enjoyed this feeling of being a decision-maker. After Emily joined us, I noticed that she was more outstanding than me in many areas. I was worried that everyone would start going to her with their problems, causing me to lose my voice and decision-making power among them, and so I excluded her in every possible way. Whether it was the leader asking me to divide up the work and collaborate with her or the brothers and sisters wanting her to join in work discussions, I resisted it in my heart. I even made excuses to push her out, not letting her participate in the work and wanting to dominate the group so that brothers and sisters would only listen to me when they had problems. The church had assigned me such an important duty, yet I never thought about how to do the work well. Rather, I spent all my time thinking about how not to be outshined by Emily and how

to maintain my status. My desire for reputation and status was too strong. God says: **“Anyone who pursues fame, gain and status rather than properly doing their duty is playing with fire and playing with their life. Those who play with fire and their lives can doom themselves at any moment”** (The Word, Vol. 4. Exposing Antichrists. Item Eight: They Would Have Others Submit Only to Them, Not the Truth or God (Part One)). Reading God’s words, I became especially fearful, realizing that God’s disposition is righteous and does not tolerate being offended. If I continued pursuing fame, gain and status without repenting and kept excluding and attacking Emily, I could only end up offending God’s disposition and being revealed and eliminated. I also thought of those antichrists who had been expelled from the church. When someone was better than them and posed a threat to their status, they saw that person as an enemy and used various despicable means to suppress, exclude, and torment them and achieve their goal of sole power. Ultimately, they were expelled from the church for their numerous evil deeds. Similarly, the Chinese Communist Party, in order to consolidate its regime, desperately wants everyone to bow down to it. It is ruthless toward those who could pose a threat to its position and wants to eliminate them completely, attempting to keep status and power firmly in its grip forever. Looking at myself, were my actions to consolidate my status by excluding Emily any different in nature from those of antichrists and the great red dragon? This realization scared me, and I prayed to God in repentance, asking Him to guide me to resolve my problems.

A few days later, a sudden typhoon warning was issued in Emily’s region. During our meeting before the typhoon hit, she felt deeply moved, saying, “When disaster strikes, I feel that the opportunity to do my duty is so precious. But I haven’t seized this opportunity or given my best to satisfy God. ...” Hearing this, I felt deeply self-reproachful. During this time, I had

been competing with Emily for fame and gain, excluding her in every way to maintain my status and not collaborating with her properly or doing my duty well. I suddenly felt sorry for both Emily and God. I prayed silently to God in my heart, “Oh God, if I don’t have another opportunity to collaborate with Emily in the future, I’ll be left with nothing but regret. If I could start over, I would seize the opportunity to collaborate properly with her.” That afternoon, I learned that the typhoon had passed, and that Emily’s region was unaffected. I constantly thanked God for His protection.

Afterward, I prayed to God, seeking a path to practice and entry. I read God’s words that say: **“Regardless of what the direction or target of your pursuit is, if you do not reflect on the pursuit of status and reputation, and if you find it very difficult to put these things aside, then they will affect your life entry. As long as status has a place in your heart, it will totally control and influence your life’s direction and the goals you strive for, in which case it will be very difficult for you to enter the truth reality, to say nothing of achieving changes in your disposition; whether you are ultimately able to gain God’s approval, of course, goes without saying. What’s more, if you are never able to put aside your pursuit of status, this will affect your ability to adequately do your duty, which will make it very difficult for you to become an acceptable created being. Why do I say this? God loathes nothing more than when people pursue status, because the pursuit of status is a satanic disposition, it is a wrong path, it is born of the corruption of Satan, it is something condemned by God, and it is the very thing that God judges and purifies. God loathes nothing more than when people pursue status, and yet you still mulishly compete for status, you unfailingly cherish and protect it, always trying to take it for yourself. And in nature, is all of this not antagonistic to God? Status is not ordained for**

people by God; God provides people with the truth, the way, and the life, and ultimately makes them become an acceptable created being, a small and insignificant created being—not someone who has status and prestige and is revered by thousands of people” (The Word, Vol. 4. Exposing Antichrists. Item Nine (Part Three)). After reading God’s words, I understood that pursuing reputation and status is completely contrary to God’s intentions. The more one pursues status, the more God detests them, and the further they stray from His requirements. They will ultimately resist God more and more, which leads to Him punishing and eliminating them. A true created being should conscientiously submit to God’s sovereignty and do their duty in a down-to-earth manner to satisfy God. This is the pursuit that people should have. God favoring me and giving me the opportunity to practice working as a supervisor was meant to help me do my duty properly and harness my strengths to do the work well. It was not to grant me power, much less to allow me to pursue reputation and status. I needed to let go of my ambitions and desires, collaborate properly with Emily, and do my duty well.

Later, I read another passage of God’s words about how to cooperate with others: **“What do you say, is it hard to cooperate with other people? It isn’t, actually. You could even say it is easy. But why do people still feel this to be difficult? Because they have corrupt dispositions. For those who possess humanity, conscience, and reason, cooperating with others is relatively easy, and they can feel that this is something joyful. This is because it is not easy for anyone to accomplish things on their own, and whatever the field they’re involved in, or what they’re doing, it is always good to have someone there to point things out and offer assistance—much easier than doing it by themselves. Also, there are limits to what people’s caliber is capable of or what they**

themselves can experience. No one can be a master of all trades: It is impossible for one person to know everything, to be capable of everything, to accomplish everything—that is impossible, and everyone should possess such reason. And so, no matter what you do, whether it be important or not, you will always need someone there to help you, to give you pointers and advice, or to do things in cooperation with you. This is the only way to ensure that you will do things more correctly, make fewer mistakes and be less likely to go astray—it is a good thing”

(The Word, Vol. 4. Exposing Antichrists. Item Eight: They Would Have Others Submit Only to Them, Not the Truth or God (Part One)). God speaks very clearly on the significance and importance of collaboration. No matter how capable a person is, no one is all-powerful; everyone needs the help of others. Collaboration allows us to make up for each other's deficiencies and avoid going astray, which benefits the church's work as well. Cooperating with others and listening to their opinions is something a person with normal humanity and reason should do. Reflecting on myself, although I was the supervisor of the watering work and believed I had some experience and caliber, knew a bit of foreign language, and appeared to be capable of doing some work, I often did my duty using my mind and my experience, rarely seeking the truth principles. Relying on what little I had to do things alone, my perspective on issues was not always accurate or comprehensive, with frequent deviations, and my work results were always rather poor. Compared to me, Emily was of better caliber and understood the truth better. She sought the truth principles when encountering problems, and would reflect on and understand herself when she revealed corruptions. Her strengths were precisely what I lacked. God placed someone better than me by my side to help us complement each other and do our duties well. This was not only beneficial to the church work but also to my own life. It was

God showing His love for me. After understanding God's intention, I prayed to Him, "Oh God, I have always been jealous of Emily and competed with her, even suppressing and ridiculing her. Now, I finally see that You arranged for Emily to work with me to compensate for my shortcomings. I thank You from the bottom of my heart. From now on, I am willing to cooperate properly with Emily and do my duty well, and I will not pursue reputation and status any longer." After that, I took the initiative to open up to Emily about my corrupt revelations. After fellowshiping, I felt much more at ease, and we grew a bit closer to each other. After that, when doing my duty, I no longer viewed her as a competitor, but as a helper. When there were problems within the group, I proactively communicated and discussed them with her. We sought together when we couldn't see through something, and we fellowshiped on our insights. This way, we could feel God's enlightenment and guidance and were able to resolve some real problems.

Not long after, a brother affected the work due to consistently being perfunctory in his duty, and we needed to fellowship with him and dismiss him. I was worried that I couldn't fellowship with him clearly and point out his problems. I thought that Emily's fellowshiping on the truth was more illuminating than mine and considered asking her to join me in fellowshiping. However, I was apprehensive, thinking, "If I take the initiative to involve her in my work, wouldn't that make me appear incompetent?" When this thought arose, I realized my state was not right—I was again trying to protect my reputation and status. So, I prayed to God. I read God's words that say: **"People get results in whichever things they focus on, wherever they put forth effort. If you always focus on doctrine, then you will only obtain doctrine; if you focus on getting status and power, then your status and power might be stable, but you**

will not have obtained the truth, and you will be eliminated. Regardless of the duty you do, life entry is the important thing. You cannot relax in this regard, nor can you be neglectful” (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. Six Indicators of Life Growth). **“Only when cooperating in harmony can people be blessed before God, and the more of this one experiences, the more reality they possess, their path grows brighter as they walk it, and they become ever more at ease”** (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. On Harmonious Cooperation). God’s words gave me a clear path to practice; pursuing reputation and status is a path of resisting God and can ultimately only lead to being eliminated. I couldn’t keep worrying about whether my status was secure and whether the brothers and sisters thought highly of me. I ought to consider the church’s work and do what was beneficial to it. Realizing this, I felt relieved, and I invited Emily to join me in fellowshiping with that brother. After fellowshiping, he gained some understanding about the nature of his problems. I finally experienced the joy of collaborating well, as well as the peace and happiness that come from practicing according to the truth. Thanks be to Almighty God!

78. What Stopped Me From Speaking Honestly?

A Letter to Zheng Xin

By Chenxi, China

Dear Zheng Xin,

Hope you've been well!

In your last letter, you mentioned that the sister you were partnered with was unprincipled, arrogant, self-righteous, and arbitrary. You wanted to mention this to her but feared she'd be unaccepting, form a bad opinion of you, and you'd not be able to work together in the future. You were conflicted and didn't know how to resolve this state. I can understand how you feel. We live by satanic philosophies, trying to maintain our relationships and focusing on how others see us. These things constrain us and make us afraid to practice the truth and adhere to principles. I've been in this state myself before, and with the exposure of God's word, I gained some understanding of my incorrect viewpoints and corrupt disposition. I have now changed somewhat and am no longer so constrained in pointing out others' problems. I'll tell you about my experience. Hopefully it'll help you a little.

I used to do church work with Zhou Fang and Liu Ying. Zhou Fang would often dominate work discussions. Later, because we weren't getting good results in our duties, the leader arranged for Sister Zhang Ling to direct our work. Zhang Ling was able to find problems in our work and point out paths of practice. Seeing that we were listening to her ideas, Zhou Fang began to get jealous. Sometimes, during work discussions, even when Zhang Ling's views were clearly correct, Zhou Fang would just find ways to overturn them, making it very hard to carry on work discussions. I

wanted to bring this up with Zhou Fang, but then I thought a little friction at the start of collaboration was inevitable, so I didn't make a big deal of it. Zhang Ling went on to follow up on work thoroughly, and promptly fellowshiped on solutions when she found problems, greatly improving our efficiency. But Zhou Fang began to insinuate that Zhang Ling was trying to build up her reputation, wanted quick gains, and worked for status. Her implications were judgmental, belittling, and intended to sow discord, causing Liu Ying to start opposing Zhang Ling too. I started to think Zhou Fang's problem was pretty serious when I saw her protecting her status, and belittling and ostracizing Zhang Ling. Zhou Fang was revealing an antichrist's disposition and walking an antichrist's path. I wanted to take a moment to fellowship on the nature of this with her, but I just couldn't get the words out. It was like my mouth had been glued shut. My state then was the same as yours is now. I was filled with apprehension. I feared that if I dissected Zhou Fang's problem of walking an antichrist's path, she would form a bad opinion of me, take on a stony expression, or ostracize me as she did Zhang Ling. I didn't want to point out her problems and found some excuses to console myself, "It's not that she doesn't know herself, as she was aware of her preoccupation with renown and status before. A change in disposition can't happen overnight; best let her take her time and reflect on it."

After this, each time I thought about how I wasn't truly helping or pointing out Zhou Fang's problems to her, I'd feel really guilty. I prayed to God, asking Him to guide me to not be constrained by my corrupt disposition and to speak the truth. In the next few days, I came across an experiential testimony video in which the protagonist's experience was similar to my state. A sister she was doing her duty with was always vying for status and gains, impacting the church's work, so she wanted to report

the problem to the leader. But since she feared offending her partner, she delayed making her report. It wasn't until she was seriously pruned that she began to reflect. She then read a passage of God's word that I found very stirring. God's word says: **"Those who walk the middle path are the most insidious people of all. They offend no one, they are smooth and slick, they are good at playing along in all situations, and no one can see their faults. They are like living Satans!"** (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. Only by Practicing the Truth Can One Cast Off the Shackles of a Corrupt Disposition). This passage left a deep impression on me. God said that those who take the middle road are the most sinister and deceitful and are living Satans. Wasn't that how my state was? I knew that Zhou Fang's problem was pretty serious and was already disrupting church work, and that she needed to be warned promptly, but I feared offending her, so I said nothing and didn't protect the church's work. I was walking the middle road just as God described and I was a person God detested. This was hard for me to take, so I decided not to be a deceitful people-pleaser any longer. I had to uphold principles and protect the church's work, and I knew I had to find a time to point out Zhou Fang's problem to her. But that same day, I was caught off guard when Zhou Fang actually pointed out my problems first. She said things like I was seeking renown and status in my duty and that I was using my status to scold people. I saw that my own problems were so serious that I didn't have the courage to point out her issues further, just brushing over what I'd planned to say, and saying nothing about her seeking renown and status or walking an antichrist's path. I remember that she then asked for me to tell her if I saw she had any problems, so that she could recognize them and change. I said dishonestly that there were none. I actually had a lot I wanted to say but I didn't dare say it, as I worried she'd think I was trying to get back at her, and that it'd be hard to work together if she saw me in a bad

light. So, to allow her to save face, I said nothing. I was filled with self-reproach and a sense of condemnation after this. I felt like such a coward. I couldn't even say a few honest words, to say nothing of practicing the truth. For a while, I couldn't eat or sleep properly and I couldn't calm myself at gatherings. I prayed to God, "God! I clearly see my sister's problems but I'm too scared of offending her to speak up! I'm so cowardly and selfish! I don't want to carry on like this. Please guide me to rebel against myself and be a person with a sense of justice."

After this I read some of God's words: **"If you strike others, don't strike them in the face; if you call others out, don't call out their shortcomings.'** This describes a method for interacting with others that Satan has inculcated in people. It means that when you interact with others, you must give them some leeway. You should not be too harsh with others, you cannot bring up their past faults, you have to maintain their dignity, you cannot damage good relationships with them, you must be forgiving toward them, and so on. This saying about morality mainly describes a kind of philosophy for worldly dealings that dictates interactions among human beings. There is a tenet in philosophies for worldly dealings that says, 'Keeping silent on the faults of good friends makes for a long and good friendship.' It means that in order to preserve a friendly relationship, one must keep silent about their friend's problems, even if they see them clearly—that they should abide by the principles of not striking people in the face or calling out their shortcomings. They are to deceive each other, hide from each other, engage in intrigue with each other; and though they know with crystal clarity what sort of person the other is, they do not say it outright, but employ cunning methods to preserve their friendly relationship. Why would one want to preserve such relationships? It is about not wanting

to make enemies in this society, within one's group, which would mean subjecting oneself often to dangerous situations. Knowing someone will become your enemy and harm you after you have called out their shortcomings or hurt them, and not wishing to put yourself in such a situation, you employ the tenet of philosophies for worldly dealings that runs, 'If you strike others, don't strike them in the face; if you call others out, don't call out their shortcomings.' In light of this, if two people are in such a relationship, do they count as true friends? (No.) They are not true friends, much less each other's confidant. So, what sort of relationship is this, exactly? Is it not a fundamental social relationship? (It is.) In such social relationships, people cannot offer their feelings, nor have deep exchanges, nor speak about whatever they wish. They cannot say out loud what is in their heart, or the problems they see in the other, or words that would benefit the other. Instead, they pick nice things to say, to keep the other's favor. They dare not speak the truth or uphold the principles, lest it give rise to animosity toward them in others. When no one is threatening to someone, does that person not live in relative ease and peace? Is this not people's goal in promoting the saying, 'If you strike others, don't strike them in the face; if you call others out, don't call out their shortcomings'? (It is.) Clearly, this is a cunning, deceptive way of existence with an element of defensiveness, whose goal is self-preservation. People who live like this have no confidants, no close friends with whom they can say whatever they like. They are defensive with each other, and calculating, and strategic, each taking what they need from the relationship. Is this not so? At its root, the goal of 'If you strike others, don't strike them in the face; if you call others out, don't call out their shortcomings' is to keep from offending others and making enemies, to protect oneself by not

causing hurt to anyone. It is a technique and method one adopts to keep themselves from being hurt. Looking at these several facets of its essence, is the demand of people's moral conduct 'If you strike others, don't strike them in the face; if you call others out, don't call out their shortcomings' a noble one? Is it a positive one? (No.) Then, what does it teach people? That you must not upset or hurt anyone, otherwise, you are the one who will end up getting hurt; and also, that you should not trust anyone. If you hurt any one of your good friends, the friendship will quietly start to change: They will go from being your good, close friend to a stranger or an enemy. What problems can it resolve, teaching people to act so? Even if, by acting in this way, you do not make enemies and even lose a few, will this make people admire and approve of you, and always keep you as a friend? Does this fully achieve the standard for moral conduct? At the very best, this is no more than a philosophy for worldly dealings" (The Word, Vol. 6. On the Pursuit of the Truth I. What It Means to Pursue the Truth (8)). God's words exposed that "If you strike others, don't strike them in the face; if you call others out, don't call out their shortcomings" is a cunning philosophy for worldly dealings instilled in people by Satan. When people live by this type of philosophy, they use and trick each other and become guarded against each other. They don't dare open up or tell the truth to anyone. They just become ever more slippery and deceitful. I was living by this philosophy of "If you strike others, don't strike them in the face; if you call others out, don't call out their shortcomings" in my interactions. I clearly saw that Zhou Fang was jealous of Zhang Ling, that in her words, she was belittling and ostracizing her, that the nature of this problem was serious, that this was disrupting our work, and that this needed to be pointed out to Zhou Fang, but I felt that by doing this, I'd be exposing her shortcomings and embarrassing her. I also

worried that she'd see me in a bad light and not work well with me afterward. So to maintain our relationship, I said nothing, settling for just barely skimming over the topic. I didn't draw on God's word to point out the nature and consequences of her actions. When she asked me if I'd seen any other corruption in her, I clearly knew that I hadn't thoroughly pointed out her issues, but I just lied and said there was nothing more. I was telling barefaced lies, fooling and deceiving her! I saw that Zhou Fang was belittling and ostracizing Zhang Ling, but I just acted as a people pleaser and said nothing. I wasn't practicing the truth at all or protecting the church's work. I was so slippery and deceitful! God asks that we be honest and that we treat one another with candor, and that if we see others living in a corrupt disposition and walking the wrong path, or violating principles, we should lovingly offer them help and fellowship. But I was living by satanic philosophies. When I saw somebody walking the wrong path, I didn't point it out and help them. I had no love. I never exposed others' problems and I feared speaking honestly would cause myself trouble. I said nothing when I saw others' problems to protect my own interests and not make enemies. I only ever used compliments and sweet-sounding flattery. Though I seemed to get along with people, I was guarded in my interactions, and was just deceiving and using them. How are these normal relations? How is this true friendship? I had no sincerity at all. I used to think that "If you strike others, don't strike them in the face; if you call others out, don't call out their shortcomings" was a smart idea to follow to comport myself, that I'd be protecting myself, and not offending anyone or making enemies. But the exposure of God's word made me see that views like "If you strike others, don't strike them in the face; if you call others out, don't call out their shortcomings" are satanic ways of dealing with the world and that they corrupt people. They encourage us to protect ourselves,

and make us ever more selfish and deceitful. They have us just look on without fellowshiping or pointing it out as others take the wrong path and impact work. I was completely lacking in love and humanity!

I later read another passage of God's word: **"Whatever your circumstances may be, as long as you are bound, controlled, and dominated by Satan's corrupt disposition, everything you live out, everything you reveal, and everything you display—or your feelings, your thoughts and views, and your ways and means of doing things—are all satanic. All of these things violate the truth and are hostile to the words of God and the truth. The further removed you are from the word of God and the truth, the more controlled and ensnared you are by Satan's net. ... On the one hand, people are controlled by corrupt dispositions and live in Satan's net, adopting the various methods, thoughts, and viewpoints given to them by Satan to resolve issues happening around them. On the other hand, people still hope to attain peace and happiness from God. However, because they are always bound by Satan's corrupt disposition and trapped in its net, unable consciously to rebel against it and emerge from it, and because they grow removed from the word of God and the truth principles, people are never able to attain the comfort, joy, peace, and happiness that come from God. In what state do people live, in the end? They cannot rise to the task of pursuing the truth, though they would like to, and they cannot live up to God's requirements, though they wish to perform their duties properly. They are stuck right where they are. This is an agonizing torment. People live within Satan's corrupt disposition, in spite of themselves. They are more like fiends than people, often living in dark corners, searching for shameful and evil methods by which to resolve the many difficulties they face. The fact is**

that deep in their souls, people are willing to be good and to aspire toward the light. They hope to live as human beings, with dignity. They also hope that they can pursue the truth and rely on the word of God to live, and make the word of God their life and reality, but they never can put the truth into practice, and despite the many doctrines they understand, they cannot resolve their problems. People are buffeted front and back in this dilemma, unable to go forward and unwilling to go back. They are stuck where they are. And the feeling of being ‘stuck’ is one of agony—tremendous agony. People have a will to aspire toward the light, and they are unwilling to leave the word of God and the right path. However, they do not accept the truth, and cannot put God’s words into practice, and remain unable to cast off the bondage and control of their corrupt satanic disposition. Ultimately, they can only live in agony, without any real happiness” (The Word, Vol. 6. On the Pursuit of the Truth I. What It Means to Pursue the Truth (8)). From God’s word I understood that my not daring to speak up when I saw others’ problems was because I saw philosophies for worldly dealings like “If you strike others, don’t strike them in the face; if you call others out, don’t call out their shortcomings” and “Keeping silent on the faults of good friends makes for a long and good friendship” as positive things. I thought this was having love and would allow me to protect myself and not get hurt. I recalled when I was little, my grandmother taught me not to point out others’ problems when trying to get along, or else I’d make trouble for myself and be unable to gain social standing. I’d thought that what she’d said made sense, so I’d been reluctant to point out others’ faults and I’d never exposed their problems. I got along very well with my friends and I really thought that this was the secret to social interaction. I felt this was an admirable way to live and that it made me a kind person, and that if I didn’t stick to these values, I’d not be a good

person. I was relying on these satanic philosophies in my interactions with other members. I'd seen others violating principles and taking the wrong path and I knew very well that I had to point this out and help them, but I was constrained by these satanic philosophies and dared not point it out to others. Satan's philosophies were like a net that bound me tightly, stopping me from moving, and utterly controlling my heart. We weren't getting very good results in our work, so the church arranged for Zhang Ling to guide us. This was beneficial to the church's work. But Zhou Fang not only didn't cooperate harmoniously with Zhang Ling, she also accused her of pursuing renown, status and quick gains when she saw her having a sense of burden for the work, shouldering responsibility and being diligent and effective in her duty. She belittled her, ostracized her, and attacked her positivity. She also judged Zhang Ling in front of me and Liu Ying, trying to get us to join in ostracizing her too. Zhou Fang ostracized and attacked Zhang Ling for her own status. This isn't normal corruption. This is an antichrist's disposition. I should have fulfilled my responsibility as her partner and pointed this out to her, but I didn't act like her partner at all, causing our work to be impacted. I felt so guilty and hated myself for being so selfish and irresponsible. Though I didn't point out Zhou Fang's problems, she held no biases against me, and our relationship was maintained, I knew the truth and still did not practice it, which offended and disgusted God.

I continued to seek. Why couldn't I expose others' problems when I saw them? I read this passage in God's word: **"Is the phrase 'call out' in the saying 'if you call others out, don't call out their shortcomings' good or bad? Does the phrase 'call out' have a level on which it refers to people's being revealed or exposed within the words of God? (It does not.) From My understanding of the phrase 'call out' as it exists in human language, it does not mean that. Its essence is one of a somewhat**

malicious form of exposure; it means to reveal people's problems and deficiencies, or some things and behaviors unknown to others, or some intrigue, ideas, or views operating in the background. This is the meaning of the phrase 'call out' in the saying 'if you call others out, don't call out their shortcomings.' If two people get along well and are confidants, with no barriers between them, and they each hope to be of benefit and assistance to the other, then it would be best for them to sit together and lay out each other's problems in openness and sincerity. This is proper, and it is not calling out others' shortcomings. If you discover another person's problems but see that they are not yet able to accept your advice, then simply do not say anything, so as to avoid quarrel or conflict. If you want to help them, you can seek their opinion and first ask them, 'I see that you have a bit of a problem, and I hope to give you some advice. I don't know if you'll be able to accept it. If you will, I'll tell you. If you won't, I'll keep it to myself for now and not say anything.' If they say, 'I trust you. Whatever you have to say won't be out of bounds; I can accept it,' that means that you have been granted permission, and you can then communicate their problems to them, one by one. Not only will they completely accept what you say, but also benefit from it, and the two of you will still be able to maintain a normal relationship. Is that not treating each other with sincerity? (It is.) This is the correct method for interacting with others; it is not calling out others' shortcomings. What does it mean not to 'call out others' shortcomings,' as the saying in question goes? It means not to speak of others' deficiencies, not to speak of their most taboo problems, not to expose the essence of their problems, and not to be so blatant in calling it out. It means just to make some surface-level remarks, to say things that are commonly said by all, to say things that the person

themselves is already able to perceive, and not to reveal mistakes the person has made previously or sensitive issues. What does it benefit the person if you act in this way? Perhaps you will not have offended them or made an enemy of them, but what you have done in no way helps or benefits them. Therefore, the phrase ‘don’t call out others’ shortcomings’ itself is evasive and a form of trickery that does not allow sincerity in people’s treatment of each other. One could say that to act in this way is to harbor evil intentions; it is not the correct way of interacting with others. Nonbelievers even see ‘if you call others out, don’t call out their shortcomings’ as something a person of noble morals should do. It is clearly a deceitful manner of interacting with others, which people adopt to protect themselves; it is not at all a proper mode of interaction. Not calling out others’ shortcomings itself is insincere, and in calling out others’ shortcomings, there may be an ulterior intent” (The Word, Vol. 6. On the Pursuit of the Truth I. What It Means to Pursue the Truth (8)). I was the same as you before. I felt that pointing out problems in others’ duties was exposing their shortcomings and that it hurt them. I felt that doing this would make enemies and impact our relationships. Now I see that this view was wrong and that I didn’t view things in line with God’s word. God asks that we be honest, treat one another with candor, and be able to help one another when associating with brothers and sisters. When we see others violating principles based on their corrupt dispositions, or taking the wrong path, we should point out their problems in line with the truth principles, guiding them in knowing themselves. Even if the words spoken when pruning others may be unpleasant to hear for others, it is done to help them know themselves. This is genuine love and help. This is protecting the church’s work. So-called “calling out their shortcomings” is not actually offering sincere help; rather, it is loaded with personal

motivations and biases, relies on a corrupt disposition to expose shortcomings and ills, and works to attack, judge, and belittle for the sake of hurting or embarrassing another. It doesn't give a person any path. It only causes pain and negativity. I saw that Zhou Fang was pursuing renown and status, and was on an antichrist's path, which has impacted the church's work. If I provided fellowship and pointed this out, it would help her reflect and understand herself. It would protect the church's work while helping her. At this realization, I felt a little brighter and at ease and no longer constrained by fallacious views.

After this I read another passage of God's word that clarifies the principles on how to treat other brothers and sisters. Almighty God says: **"In God's house, what are the principles for how people are treated? You should treat everyone according to the truth principles, and you should treat each of your brothers and sisters fairly. How to treat them fairly? This must be based on God's words, on which people God saves, and which He eliminates, on which He likes, and which He hates; these are the truth principles. Brothers and sisters should be treated with loving help, and mutual acceptance and patience. Evil people and disbelievers should be identified, separated, and kept away from. Only by doing so are you treating people with principles. Every brother and sister has strengths and shortcomings, and they all have corrupt dispositions, so when they are together, they should lovingly help each other out, they should be accepting and patient and should not nitpick or be too harsh. ... You have to look at how God treats ignorant and foolish people, how He treats those with immature stature, how He treats the normal revelations of humanity's corrupt disposition, and how He treats those who are malicious. God treats different people in different ways, and He also has various ways of managing different**

people's myriad conditions. You must understand these truths. Once you have understood these truths, you will then know how to experience matters and treat people according to principles" (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. To Gain the Truth, One Must Learn From the People, Events, and Things Nearby). From God's word I understood the principles for helping brothers and sisters. Because of Satan's corruption we all have many corrupt dispositions. Regarding the corrupt dispositions people reveal in the performance of their duties, if work is not impacted, or if a person's stature is too immature, we cannot arbitrarily seize on a person's corruptions or shortcomings to expose and dissect these things to hurt them. This kind of situation requires reliance on love to positively fellowship and help them. But for those who walk the path of antichrists or have serious corrupt dispositions, disrupting and disturbing the church's work, if positive fellowship gets no results, they must be pruned, and their behavior exposed and dissected, so that they can know the nature of their problem and truly repent. If they aren't exposed or dissected, then they won't be able to reflect on or understand their problem and they will continue to disrupt and disturb church work. People must be helped according to their essence, stature, and unique background. We shouldn't always expose and dissect people's problems immediately, nor should we always choose tolerance and patience. Some things don't affect work and require tolerance and patience, but some things do cause disruptions or disturbances in work, and in these cases, people must be exposed and pruned using specific measures appropriate to the person's stature. The result of this is that brothers and sisters will know their corruption and be able to repent, change, and act according to principles. This kind of fellowship helps people while benefiting the church's work. With these realizations, my heart felt brighter, and I wrote a letter to Zhou Fang exposing her problems. She later replied

to my letter, saying, “Thank you for exposing and pruning me. I’d not expected my problems to be so serious. I’d always thought I only revealed a little corruption and that this was fine so long as I reflected and found some of God’s word to read. I was completely unaware I was on an antichrist’s path and had issues with my humanity. I see through your fellowship and dissection that you sincerely want to help me. I am willing to accept this, and to reflect and understand myself.” Reading these words really touched me. I felt that practicing God’s word benefited both me and others, and my heart felt at ease and calm.

Through this experience, I see that with my previous reliance on ideas like “If you strike others, don’t strike them in the face; if you call others out, don’t call out their shortcomings,” I was being harmed by Satan, and living a selfish, despicable, and deceitful life. I now see clearly that only God’s word is the truth and that only by viewing people and things, and comporting ourselves and acting according to God’s words can we live out a human semblance.

My experience was quite superficial, so if you have any further insight you can write to me.

Yours sincerely,

Chenxi

September 10, 2022

79. Who Caused the Ruin of My Family?

By Wang Zhiying, China

In my early years, because I worked as a civil servant in the government, my husband was a high school teacher and our daughter was a cute, smart little girl who got good grades, everyone envied us for having such a seemingly perfect and harmonious family. Then, toward the end of 2005, I had the fortune of accepting Almighty God's work of the last days and came to know that Almighty God is the returned Lord Jesus, and He expresses the truth to do the work of judgment to purify, save, and bring man into the kingdom of God. I brought this wonderful news to my husband and mother-in-law and my mother-in-law soon also accepted God's work of the last days. Despite not accepting himself, my husband didn't object to our faith. During that time, I would read God's words every day, fellowship the truth with my brothers and sisters and do my duty—those were rich, rewarding and happy days. I never imagined that those days would quickly come to an end due to the CCP's persecution.

One afternoon in 2006, after I'd just gotten home from a gathering, my husband angrily said to me, "I used to think that having faith in God was a good thing, but I just saw on the internet that the government is cracking down on believers hard. The Church of Almighty God is a major target of the government's crackdown, and if arrested, you'll be considered a serious offender and sentenced to jail time. Any civil servant who has family members that believe in Almighty God will be severely punished, stripped of their job, their social welfare will be revoked, and their children will not be able to apply to university, serve in the military or apply for civil servant positions. Starting from today, you are no longer allowed to believe in Almighty God!" Having finished his tirade, he stormed out of the house. I

was quite angry and thought to myself, “In our faith, all we do is eat and drink God’s words, pursue the truth and walk the right path, we don’t do anything unlawful. Yet, despite that, the CCP still aims to arrest and oppress us—how evil they are! No matter how they persecute me, I will continue to follow Almighty God!”

The next day, upon finishing my duty and returning home, my stern-faced mother-in-law questioned me, asking, “Why are you coming home so late? Are you really going to continue believing even though it’s so dangerous to do so now? I read on the internet today that you can be arrested for believing in God, sentenced to jail, your children won’t be able to apply for college and both you and your husband will be relieved of your civil servant positions. For the future of my granddaughter, I’ve decided to stop believing in God.” Cracking a sinister smile, my husband remarked, “You see, my mom has some sense to her! As soon as she heard that you could be arrested for practicing faith, she quit right away—you should stop believing as well! If you’re arrested while believing, our whole family will be drawn into the ordeal and it’ll all be because of you. You’d better think this over!” Hearing this, I became a bit worried and thought to myself, “If I continue practicing faith and doing my duty and am caught and arrested, my husband will be fired from his job and my daughter will also be negatively influenced. If that happens, they’ll certainly both hate me for it. Maybe I can avoid going to gatherings for a little bit to avoid getting my family in trouble.” But when I had this thought, I felt very uneasy inside. I thought, “If I don’t go to gatherings and do my duty in order to avoid being arrested by the CCP, will I still qualify as a believer? Will I still be able to attain the truth?” I hurriedly called out to God. Just then, I thought of God’s words which say: **“Of everything that occurs in the universe, there is nothing in which I do not have the final say. Is there anything that is not in My**

hands? Whatever I say is done, and who among human beings can change My mind?” (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. God’s Words to the Entire Universe, Chapter 1). Pondering over God’s words, I gained a clearer understanding. Our fates as humans all lie in God’s hands. God had already preordained whether or not my husband and I would be fired and what my daughter’s future would be. These were not things that mere men could decide upon. Having realized this, I told them, “God has the final word on whether I’ll be arrested and whether our child’s future will be affected. Man is God’s creation, and it is perfectly natural and justified for us to believe in and worship God. I know this is what I ought to do, so I won’t go along with you in abandoning the true way.” My husband became irate and began belittling me and making verbal thrusts, “Get real! We’ve worked in the CCP’s system for so many years and you still don’t understand their policies? China can’t possibly have true religious freedom. In China, you can only put your faith in the party. Whatever the party decides, that’s the law and you can’t go against it. Take the Tiananmen Square incident: those students were just trying to attain democracy and freedom, but they were brutally suppressed by the CCP and even falsely accused of inciting riot and revolution, for which many of them were arrested and jailed. There were even some students who were run over by tanks. The mere thought of it gives me the chills. Think about it: If they could act so brutally toward students, do you really think they’ll let you believers off easy? You’ve got to see the writing on the wall, you’re a Chinese citizen and so you can only believe in the CCP and absolutely cannot believe in God.” Hearing my husband’s argument, I thought to myself, “The CCP truly is quite savage, fierce and demonic. If I insist on believing in God and am caught, they’ll certainly beat me to death.” I couldn’t help but become a bit scared. Just then, I recalled the Lord Jesus’ words which say: **“And fear not them**

which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear Him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell” (Matthew 10:28). God’s words filled me with faith—all events and things are in God’s hands and without God’s permission, the CCP couldn’t so much as lay a finger on me. Even if I eventually was arrested and beaten to death or crippled, it would be with God’s permission. If I could stand firm in my witness and humiliate Satan, my life would not have been lived in vain. I couldn’t be constrained by what my husband just said and live an undignified life under Satan’s power like him. I had to rely on God to stand firm in my testimony.

After my husband saw that I still hadn’t abandoned my faith, he would often pick at my flaws, denigrate and reprimand me and would even criticize me in front of my daughter for not doing the work that I ought to be doing. My mother-in-law also started giving me dirty looks and berating me, saying I had too much free time wasting my time on useless things and neglecting my child’s and family’s future in favor of my own faith. Apart from my daughter, no one would talk to me—it was like there was no place left for me in the family. Over time, I began to become a bit weak, so I came before God in prayer and seeking and saw this passage of God’s words: **“The great red dragon persecutes God and is the enemy of God, and so, in this land, those who believe in God are thus subjected to humiliation and oppression.... It is tremendously difficult for God to carry out His work in the land of the great red dragon—but it is through this difficulty that God does one stage of His work, making manifest His wisdom and His wondrous deeds, and using this opportunity to make this group of people complete”** (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. Is the Work of God As Simple As Man Imagines?). Through God’s words I learned that the CCP regime is Satan’s regime. The CCP deeply hates God and the truth and so those who believe in God in China all

inevitably are subject to oppression by the CCP. God's wisdom, however, is exercised based on Satan's schemes and God uses the difficult environments created by the CCP's arrests and oppression to perfect our faith. My husband was going along with the CCP in persecuting me and my family rejected me; I was suffering and felt a bit humiliated, but this was the suffering that came with pursuing the truth and walking the right path and so it was well worth it. I shouldn't wallow in negativity and weakness, which was hurtful to God. I had to stand firm in my witness for Him! When I realized this, I didn't feel quite as sad anymore and gained renewed faith.

After that, my husband and mother-in-law would take turns monitoring me and wouldn't let me gather or read God's words. I didn't let them constrain me, however, and would sneak off when they weren't looking to attend gatherings and read God's words under the covers with a flashlight at night. But then, one day when I was going out for a gathering, my mother-in-law caught me and, with tears in her eyes, she said, "Child, please, please stop believing in God. If you're caught, what will become of our family? My son said if you keep this up, he'll divorce you. You're a good daughter-in-law, I don't want to lose you and I can't bear to see our family come apart." It was really hard to see my mother-in-law like that with tears wetting her cheeks. In the past, she had always treated me like her own daughter and I couldn't bear to see her suffer like that, so I fellowshipped with her, "Mom, you've read God's words yourself, so you know that God created mankind, the heavens and earth and all things. Our lives and everything we enjoy come from Him, and believing in and worshiping God is perfectly natural and justified. In the last days, Almighty God has expressed many truths to save us from sin. If we give up on our faith because we're afraid of being arrested, we'll lose our chance of being saved. Also, I'm walking on the right path of life in my belief in God, if our

family falls apart, doesn't the fault lie with the CCP? The CCP is the real villain here. We should stand firm in our witness throughout this ordeal and not betray God." My mother-in-law angrily replied, "I know that it's good to believe in God, but how can I possibly dare continue believing now that the CCP is making arrests? If you insist on believing in God, I'll have no choice but to stand on my son's side for the sake of our family." All I could do was tell her, "If you want to give up your faith, that's your choice, but please don't go along with the CCP in obstructing me from and persecuting me for believing in God. You know that I believe in the true God and follow the true way. Even if I'm arrested and sent to prison, I will continue believing in God until the very end." Hearing this, she stormed out and returned to her bedroom in anger, slamming the door on her way out.

When my husband returned home and heard that I'd been out at a gathering, he angrily grilled me, "Do you have a death wish or something? Do you think what they're saying on the internet is a joke? That came from the National Public Security Bureau's website. Do you know that many believers of Almighty God have already been arrested, and some have been sentenced to jail, beaten to death or crippled? Don't let your faith drag our family down!" In a wild fit of rage, he went rummaging through our bedroom looking for my books of God's words and threw my flashlight that I used to read on the ground while yelling, "If you won't give up your faith, and insist on continuing to believe in God, you will no longer be a part of this family! I feel scared and on edge every day due to your belief in God. Do you know that we could lose our jobs if you get arrested? My colleague's wife is always bringing up how you're a believer with me and it's become very awkward for me at work. You've made me completely lose face! I need an answer from you today: Are you choosing your faith or our family? If you choose our family, then just live a normal life properly at

home, you won't have any obligations, and I'll even give you money every month to play mahjong. I'll give you whatever you need. If you insist on continuing to believe in God, I'll divorce you, you won't get any share in our assets and you won't be allowed to see our daughter." I was crushed to see how heartless and cruel my husband had become, tears welled up in my eyes and I felt deeply hurt. I had worked so hard to earn money for our family, we had only just renovated the house, and now my husband was just going to send me walking after more than ten years of happy marriage just to save his face and future prospects. By then, it was clear our marriage existed only in name. I replied to him, saying, "Even if you leave me with nothing after our divorce, I will still choose to follow God." In a sinister, loathsome voice he replied, "If you're going to choose to follow God, I won't make it easy for you. I'll send you to the Public Security Bureau, they'll know how to handle you!" With that, he showed me a letter he had printed out that said, "My wife believes in Almighty God and is now beyond saving. I've tried everything I can, but she just won't listen to me, so I have no choice but to ask the Public Security Bureau to help me deal with my wife. If any assistance is required, I will be fully compliant." When I saw that letter, I was furious, thinking, "What kind of husband is he? He is nothing but a demon! He is clearly aware of how brutally the CCP treated believers in God, but he is still willing to send me to the Public Security Bureau. Isn't he effectively just sending me to my death?" It was very worrying to me to see that my own husband had completely lost his humanity, and was now capable of doing anything. "If he really does take me to the Public Security Bureau, what will I do then? They specialize in harming and even killing believers in there." The more I thought about it, the more frightened I became and so I continually prayed to God, asking Him to give me faith and strength. After prayer, I recalled a passage of

God's words that I had read during devotionals: **"You should not be afraid of this and that; no matter how many difficulties and dangers you might face, you are capable of remaining steady before Me, unobstructed by any hindrance, so that My will may be carried out unimpeded. This is your duty.... Be not afraid; with My support, who could ever block this road? Remember this! Do not forget!"** (The Word, Vol.

1. The Appearance and Work of God. Utterances of Christ in the Beginning, Chapter 10). God's words filled me with strength and faith—God is my shield and so there is nothing for me to be afraid of. With steadfast conviction, I said to my husband, "Even if you hand me over to the Public Security Bureau, I will continue to believe in God. You should know that the CCP can only brutalize and torture my body, but they will never destroy my will to follow God. No matter how they persecute me, I will continue to believe in God even if it means my death!" Seeing how determined I was in my faith, my husband shook his head resignedly and said, "Oh no, oh no, she's beyond the point of saving!" Seeing how my husband had run out of ideas, I thanked God from the bottom of my heart for giving me the faith to stand my ground.

After dinner, I sat on my bed and reflected on everything that had happened that day and realized that I couldn't continue living in that house. As I thought about that, I began to feel a little sad and unwilling to part and tears came streaming from my eyes. Seeing me crying, my husband tried to tempt me again, saying, "If you promise not to believe in God, I won't divorce you and send you to the Public Security Bureau. Then our family can go on living harmoniously just as before." I replied, "Almighty God has expressed the truths to do the work of judging and purifying mankind. We should all accept the truth and come before God in repentance in order to be saved by Him. This is our only way out. These days, calamities are

occurring with ever greater magnitude—if you continue to follow along with the CCP in obstructing and persecuting my belief in God, you’ll fall victim to these calamities and be punished!” My husband just couldn’t accept what I was saying and angrily retorted, “Don’t bring up your faith in front of me. Even if Almighty God really was the true God, I still wouldn’t believe in Him. If you still insist on believing in God, I’ll be taking you to the Public Security Bureau first thing tomorrow!” Seeing that I wasn’t listening to him, he flew into a rage, held me down on the bed, slapped me across the face and began to strangle me while saying, “Your faith has not only damaged our family, it’s dragging me down too. We’ll see if you still believe in God after I beat you to death!” As I struggled desperately to free myself, my mother-in-law heard the commotion and came into our bedroom. She castigated me, saying, “Your faith has torn this family apart and it’s dragging down my son now too.” This made me furious, and I thought, “The real reason our family has fallen into disharmony is because you both believed the CCP’s rumors and began persecuting me for my religious practice. It’s just completely unreasonable how you say it’s all my fault instead of hating the CCP. I can’t keep living like this.” I was so angry that I ran over to the window and got ready to jump out and end my life. Just as I was about to jump out, my mother-in-law pointed at me and said, “Go ahead and jump. Jump out the window, no one’s going to sacrifice their life for you!” When she said this, I suddenly came to my senses and remembered God’s words which say: **“During these last days you must bear testimony to God. No matter how great your suffering, you should walk until the very end, and even at your last breath, still you must be faithful to God and at the mercy of God; only this is truly loving God, and only this is the strong and resounding testimony”** (The Word, Vol. 1. The

Appearance and Work of God. Only by Experiencing Painful Trials Can You Know the Loveliness of

God). As I pondered over God's words, I couldn't hold back the tears from streaming down my face. Even though my family didn't understand me and even persecuted me, God continued to enlighten and guide me, to show me what His intention was. In such an environment, I knew I should rely upon God, uphold my faith in Him and stand firm in my witness to humiliate Satan. Yet I didn't seek God's intention and wanted to escape through death when faced with some persecution. Hadn't I just fallen for Satan's plot? I was so foolish and had failed to bear witness. I couldn't continue to let myself be fooled by Satan, I had to continue living, believing in God and doing my duty no matter how my family persecuted me.

When my husband realized he couldn't stop me, he called in his uncle. The uncle said to me, "I hear you insist on continuing to believe in God. You know, if you're caught, it will affect the whole family and my nephew will divorce you. If you write a pledge stating that you won't believe in God tonight, this family can stay together." My husband then handed me a pen and a pad of paper and told me to write the pledge. Thoughts raced through my head, "If we really get divorced, what will come of our child? She's still young and without me to take care of her she might be picked on by others. If my husband remarries, will the stepmother abuse her? Will she grow up in good health? If I outwardly agree to write the pledge and keep my faith in secret, the family will stay together and I can continue believing. Doesn't that give me the best of both worlds?" But the thought of doing that made me uneasy and so I prayed to God, seeking how I should act to be in line with His intention. After prayer, it occurred to me that writing the pledge would be a betrayal of God. I realized that I had once again almost fallen for Satan's tricks. If I wrote that pledge, I'd be betraying God and failing to bear testimony, so I absolutely couldn't write it. When I still hadn't started writing the pledge, my husband's uncle gritted his teeth and said, "Would it

really kill you to stop believing in God? If my wife acted like you, I'd break her arms and legs. See if she could still practice faith then!" His words made me sick and I wondered how any human could utter such filth. Wasn't he speaking just like the devil? I angrily retorted, "I WILL NOT write this pledge!" As soon as I said that, my husband angrily grabbed the divorce contract he had written up and unhesitatingly signed his name. On the contract, it stated that the house and our child would all be granted to him, whereas I would be left with no property or visitation rights for our daughter. Although I had prepared myself mentally for the divorce before, when it finally happened in real life, I still began to feel a bit weak. I had worked hard to get our family to where we were, and now I would be left without our home and no access to our daughter. I couldn't bear to leave this family, to leave my daughter, but my husband was putting the pressure on and I just couldn't make up my mind. Just then, I recalled a passage of God's words. Almighty God says: **"You must suffer hardship for the truth, you must give yourself to the truth, you must endure humiliation for the truth, and to gain more of the truth you must undergo more suffering. This is what you should do. You must not throw away the truth for the sake of a peaceful family life, and you must not lose your life's dignity and integrity for the sake of momentary enjoyment. You should pursue all that is beautiful and good, and you should pursue a path in life that is more meaningful. If you lead such a vulgar life, and do not pursue any objectives, do you not waste your life? What can you gain from such a life? You should forsake all enjoyments of the flesh for the sake of one truth, and should not throw away all truths for the sake of a little enjoyment. People like this have no integrity or dignity; there is no meaning to their existence!"** (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. The Experiences of Peter: His Knowledge of Chastisement and Judgment). After reading

God's words, I realized that it was valuable and meaningful to suffer in order to attain the truth. Only a life spent pursuing the truth in one's faith is meaningful. If I ended up living an easy lifestyle because I sought a harmonious family life and comforts of the flesh, but lost the opportunity to be saved by God, I would regret it for the rest of my life. As for my daughter's future and what suffering she would have to endure, God had already preordained all that. Even if I were to remain at her side, I wouldn't be able to ensure that she lives every day in good health, much less could I change her fate. I had to leave her fate up to God and submit to His orchestrations and arrangements. Once I had understood God's intention, I felt I had a path forward and didn't feel quite as upset. I then recalled another passage of God's words that says: **"Anyone who does not recognize God is an enemy; that is, anyone who does not recognize God incarnate—whether or not they are inside or outside this stream—is an antichrist! Who is Satan, who are demons, and who are God's enemies if not resisters who do not believe in God?" "Believers and nonbelievers are not compatible; rather, they are opposed to one another"** (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. God and Man Will Enter Into Rest Together). AS I pondered God's words, I thought back to how when my husband heard that believers in God would be arrested and oppressed by the CCP, he started persecuting me, not letting me read God's words, forbidding me from meeting with brothers and sisters, using any means necessary to obstruct my practice of faith, and even going so far as to threaten to send me to the Public Security Bureau where I would meet certain peril. Now he was forcing me to write a pledge that I wouldn't practice faith, vowing to divorce me and kick me out, leaving me with nothing if I didn't write it. I saw that my husband was nothing more than a God-resisting, truth-hating demon. Given that he had followed along with the CCP in resisting God

while I sought to follow God and walk the right path, we were clearly headed on different trajectories and would only suffer if we stayed together. Realizing this, I was able to calmly face the situation at hand and resolved to sign my name on the divorce papers.

Through experiencing this ordeal, I came to recognize the hideous, repulsive, God-resisting nature of the CCP. As God's words say: **“Religious freedom? The legitimate rights and interests of citizens? They are all tricks for covering up sin! ... Why put up such an impenetrable obstacle to the work of God? Why employ various tricks to deceive God's folk? Where is the true freedom and the legitimate rights and interests? Where is the fairness? Where is the comfort? Where is the warmth? Why use deceitful schemes to trick God's people? Why use force to suppress the coming of God? Why not allow God to freely roam upon the earth that He created? Why hound God until He has nowhere to rest His head?”** (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. Work and Entry (8)). The reign of the CCP is the reign of Satan itself. In order to reinforce the stability of their autocratic rule, the CCP wildly resists God and does everything in its power to disturb and destroy God's work of saving mankind. They use the media to libel, slander, condemn and blaspheme God, they also adopt all kinds of strategies to arrest and oppress Christians, and mislead and incite the families of Christians to oppress and attack them, causing the dissolution of their families. Yet they upend the truth and claim that believers are abandoning their families—how despicable and evil they are! Through experiencing this persecution, I gained discernment of the true nature of my husband's hatred of the truth. I also came to understand that God is the only one I can truly rely on. When I was at my weakest and most distressed, God's words enlightened and guided me time and time again, instilling me with faith and strength and

allowing me to see through Satan's evil plots so that I was able to stand firm in the face of oppression. From now on, I will continue to pursue the truth and fulfill my duty well to repay God.

80. Reflections After Being Dismissed

By Fang Hui, China

In April 2021, I was watering new believers in the church. When I first did this duty, I had a sense of burden and paid attention to working hard on the principles. Whenever I encountered problems that I didn't understand, I prayed and sought, fellowshiping often with my brothers and sisters. Gradually, I grasped some of the principles and my work started producing results. A few months later, as more and more people were seeking and investigating the true way, many people accepted God's work of the last days. In order to get these new believers watered as soon as possible, the leader put me in charge of three more groups of them. When I saw that there were so many more new believers, I balked at the idea, thinking, "I already have plenty to worry about with the groups of new believers I'm currently watering, who have many notions, problems and difficulties that need resolving. Sometimes it takes repeated fellowshiping to achieve results with them. Now that there are so many more believers, it will take much time and effort to water them all properly so that they can establish a firm foundation on the true way. This is too much trouble. How could I physically cope if things continue like this? I'm in poor shape as it is! When I fall ill with exhaustion, I'll really be in trouble." I knew that the supervisor had been watering new believers for a long time and had a firm grasp on the principles of this task, so I told myself, "In the future, for more complicated problems, I should just ask the supervisor to resolve them. Then I wouldn't have to make an effort looking for God's words and fellowshiping on them with the new believers. Not only could their problems be resolved quickly, but I'll still have some respite and save myself time and effort. Would that not be having the best of both worlds?" So from that point onward,

whenever I was watering new believers and encountered difficulties or problems that I couldn't see through clearly, I didn't seek the truth principles, but instead offloaded the problems directly onto the supervisor and asked her to do the fellowshipping and resolve them.

At a gathering, the supervisor exposed me, "What's going on with you lately? You're not diligent in your duty. Every time a new believer runs into a problem or a difficulty, you don't seek the truth to resolve it, but just get me to fellowship on it. This way, you might not need to suffer physically, but can you gain the truth? If you do your duty without any sense of burden, and continue to crave the comforts of the flesh, it's easy to lose the work of the Holy Spirit, and sooner or later you will be revealed and eliminated. You must carefully reflect on yourself!" On hearing the supervisor's words, I felt upset and contrite, realizing that it really was dangerous to continue on like I was. So, I prayed to God, asking Him to guide me to reflect and gain a better understanding of myself.

One day, I read a passage of God's words. Almighty God says: **"No matter what work some people do or what duty they perform, they are incompetent in it, they cannot shoulder it, and they are incapable of fulfilling any of the obligations or responsibilities that a person ought to. Are they not trash? Are they still worthy of being called human? With the exception of simpletons, the mentally incompetent, and those who suffer from physical impairments, is there anyone alive who ought not to do their duties and fulfill their responsibilities? But this kind of person is always slippery and slacking off, and does not wish to fulfill their responsibilities; the implication is that they do not wish to be a proper human being. God gave them the opportunity to be a human being, and He gave them caliber and gifts, yet they cannot use these in doing their duty. They do nothing, but wish to relish enjoyment at**

every turn. Is such a person fit to be called a human being? No matter what work is given to them—whether it be important or ordinary, difficult or simple—they are always perfunctory and slippery and slacking off. When problems arise, they try to push responsibility for them onto other people, taking no responsibility, and they wish to keep living their parasitic lives. Are they not useless trash? In society, who does not have to depend on themselves to make a living? Once a person becomes an adult, they must provide for themselves. Their parents have fulfilled their responsibility. Even if their parents were willing to support them, they would be uneasy with it. They ought to be able to realize that their parents have finished their mission of raising them, and that they are an able-bodied adult, and should be able to live independently. Is this not the minimum reason that an adult ought to have? If someone truly has reason, they could not possibly continue mooching off their parents; they would be afraid of others' laughter, of losing face. So, does one who loves ease and hates work have reason? (No.) They always want something for nothing; they want to never fulfill any responsibility, wishing sweets would just fall from the sky and drop into their mouths; they always want to get three square meals a day, to have someone wait on them, and to enjoy good food and drinks without doing the slightest bit of work. Is this not the mindset of a parasite? And do people who are parasites have conscience and reason? Do they have integrity and dignity? Absolutely not. They are all freeloading good-for-nothings, all beasts without conscience or reason. None of them are fit to remain in God's house" (The Word, Vol. 5. The Responsibilities of Leaders and Workers. The Responsibilities of Leaders and Workers (8)). Reflecting on myself with respect to God's words, I recognized that my attitude toward my duty was too contemptuous and perfunctory. I couldn't

even fulfill the responsibilities and obligations I should do. I really was no different from trash. Every time my workload increased and I needed to suffer and pay a price, my first consideration was my flesh. I thought that since there were more new believers to water, there would be more problems to deal with and resolve. If I had to patiently fellowship with and support each new believer, I'd have too much to worry about and tire myself out. I was afraid of suffering and making myself ill from exhaustion, so I started slacking off and being perfunctory. Whenever I encountered a problem that was even the slightest bit complicated, I offloaded it straight onto my supervisor, without making any effort to seek the truth and resolve it. I really was selfish and deceitful! I only cared about being idle and not getting physically tired. I didn't think about other people's work and difficulties at all, or whether my behavior would delay others in doing their duties. Even though this way my flesh was idle and didn't suffer much, my life wasn't progressing at all because I wasn't seeking the truth, so what could I really gain in the end? Was I not harming myself? God says that lazy and slippery people are useless trash, and is trash not spurned and eliminated by God? At this thought, I felt somewhat remorseful and afraid, so I prayed to God, saying I wanted to change my attitude toward my duties and do them diligently.

After that, whenever I encountered difficulties while watering new believers, I consciously prayed and relied on God, sought the truth, and patiently fellowshiped to resolve their difficulties, rather than offloading them onto others. But some of the new believers had strong religious notions, which in some cases they held onto so fervently that I needed to fellowship with them several times before they would let go of them. After a while, this started causing me worry and taking up a lot of my energy. By this point, I felt somewhat agitated and thought to myself, "If things

continue like this, how much effort will I have to expend in order to water the new believers properly? It's so tiring. I can just look up some relevant passage of God's words in light of their notions, send it to the new believers and let them read it, then fellowship with them if there is something they don't understand. That would take away a few of my worries." But I felt slightly uneasy whenever I did this. "It's difficult enough to get them to abandon their notions even when I fellowship with them face to face in great detail," I told myself. "If I just leave them to read everything themselves, how could they possibly understand? Ah, whatever. I'll just leave the fellowshipping until problems occur." Just like that, I let it go without giving it too much thought. After a while, some new believers no longer wanted to gather because their religious notions hadn't been resolved promptly, and some even stopped believing and quit after being misled and disturbed by pastors and elders. When I saw this kind of thing happening, I felt a bit guilty, but then I thought, "It's not all my responsibility. I sent them relevant passages of God's words to read; it's just that these new believers are too arrogant and self-righteous. They're always stubbornly adhering to their own notions and not accepting the truth, so I can't do anything to help them." Because I had been persistently lazy and perfunctory in doing my duty, I felt that God had hidden His face from me, and my thoughts became increasingly cloudy. I couldn't see a way through many problems, and my fellowshipping with new believers was dull and boring. Doing my duty became laborious and the results were getting increasingly worse. Later, the supervisor saw that my state hadn't changed and was seriously affecting my duty, so she asked me to stop doing it and instead practice spiritual devotion to reflect on myself. When I heard this I collapsed, and tears started streaming uncontrollably down my face. I knew full well that this was the consequence of me being too considerate of the

flesh and persistently perfunctory in doing my duty. I thought that I was finished. I had been suspended from my duty just as God's work was coming to an end. Was I not being eliminated? Those few days were an ordeal and I was unable to eat or sleep properly. In the midst of my anguish, I knelt down and prayed earnestly to God, "Oh God, I know that what I have done makes You detest and hate me, but I want to repent. Please enlighten me and guide me to gain a greater understanding of myself." After praying, I read a passage of God's words: **"There are some people who are unwilling to suffer at all in their duties, who always complain whenever they encounter a problem and refuse to pay a price. What kind of attitude is that? It is a perfunctory one. If you perform your duty perfunctorily, and approach it with an irreverent attitude, what will the result be? You will perform your duty poorly, though you are capable of performing it well—your performance will not be up to standard, and God will be very dissatisfied with the attitude you have toward your duty. If you could have prayed to God, sought the truth, and put your whole heart and mind into it, if you could have cooperated in this way, then God would have prepared everything for you in advance, so that when you were handling matters, everything would fall into place, and get good results. You would not need to exert a vast amount of energy; when you did your utmost to cooperate, God would have already arranged everything for you. If you are slippery and slack off, if you do not attend properly to your duty, and always go down the wrong path, then God will not act upon you; you will lose this opportunity, and God will say, 'You are no good; I cannot use you. Go stand off to the side. You like being wily and slacking off, don't you? You like being lazy, and taking it easy, do you not? Well then, take it easy forevermore!'"** God will give this grace and opportunity to someone

else. What do you say: Is this a loss or a gain? (A loss.) It is an enormous loss!” (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. Part Three).

After reading God’s words, I understood that God does not have high requirements of people; He simply wants them to wholeheartedly perform their duty as best they can. As long as they perform their duties to the best of their ability, they will be approved by God. As for people who always go through motions when performing their duty—people who are wily and opportunistic, and seek to be idle and comfortable instead of doing what they should and can do—such people are spurned by God and will not be saved by Him. Contemplating God’s words and looking back over my actions, was I not the kind of person whom God spurned? It was an honor for me to be put in charge of watering new believers by the church. How meaningful it was to be able to do such an important duty at this critical time, when the gospel of God’s kingdom was spreading! But I had been unappreciative, perfunctory in my duties, and constantly craved comfort. With a little effort and sacrifice I could have done a good job of watering the new believers, but I didn’t want to suffer that bit more hardship. Even though I was well aware that new believers would have a limited understanding if they read God’s word on their own, I still didn’t want to fellowship with them. As a result, some new believers did not want to attend gatherings because their religious notions hadn’t been resolved, and some were misled and disturbed by pastors and elders, causing them to fall away from the faith. Only now that the facts were exposed did I recognize that I wasn’t doing my duty at all, but rather disrupting and disturbing the church’s work. Back then, I didn’t recognize myself at all. Instead, I shirked responsibility and blamed the problems on the new believers themselves. How irresponsible I was! How could this not make God detest and hate me? I realized that the church had assigned me such an important job in the hope

that I could fulfill my responsibilities and water the new believers properly, so they could establish a firm foundation on the true way as quickly as possible and accept God's salvation. Yet I had been lazy, evasive, and solely intent on hiding, enjoying a life of leisure and doing as little as possible whenever I could. I didn't consider God's intention in the least, and couldn't even fulfill my duty. How could I be so totally lacking in conscience or reason? Even dogs know how to be loyal to their master and watch over the home, whereas I was enjoying God's abundant provision and yet couldn't even fulfill my own responsibilities. Was I even worthy of being called human? God's disposition is righteous and unoffendable. It was all my own fault that I had been dismissed and stopped from doing my duty. I had ruined the opportunity to do my duty and obtain the truth.

Later, I read another passage of Almighty God's word that says: **"To reach an understanding of natures, in addition to unearthing the things people are fond of in their natures, several of the most important aspects pertaining to their natures also need to be unearthed. For example, people's viewpoints on things, people's methods and goals in life, people's life values and outlook on life, as well as views and ideas on all things relating to truth. These are all things deep within people's souls and they have a direct relationship with the transformation of disposition. What, then, is corrupt mankind's outlook on life? It can be said to be this: 'Every man for himself and the devil take the hindmost.' People all live for themselves; to put it frankly, they are living for the flesh. They are living just to put food in their mouths. How does this existence differ from that of the animals? There is no value whatsoever in living like this, let alone any meaning. One's outlook on life is about what you rely on to live in the world, what you live for, and how you live—and these are all things to do with the**

essence of human nature. Through dissecting people's natures, you will see that people all resist God. They are all devils and there is no genuinely good person. Only by dissecting people's natures can you truly know the corruption and essence of man and understand what people actually belong to, what people truly lack, what they should be equipped with, and how they should live out a human likeness. Truly dissecting a person's nature is not easy, and cannot be done without experiencing God's words or having true experiences" (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. What Should Be Known About Transforming One's Disposition). Reading God's words made me realize that satanic philosophies and laws such as "Every man for himself and the devil take the hindmost," "Drink today's wine today, and worry about tomorrow, tomorrow" and "Live life on autopilot" had poisoned me too deeply. Living according to these rules had made me extremely selfish, despicable, treacherous and deceitful. No matter what I did, I only considered my own physical interests, coveted comfort, despised labor, and bore no sense of burden or responsibility in doing my duty. I lived day-to-day without any goals and direction, my life devoid of the slightest value or meaning. Thinking back to before I believed in God, I paid great consideration to the flesh and craved comforts. No matter what I did, I always did it in a perfunctory way whenever possible, doing whatever it took to satisfy my own fleshly interests, and living a despicable and wretched life. Even after I started believing in God, I still lived by these fallacious views. Whenever I became overloaded with duties, requiring me to suffer and pay a price, I was afraid of physical exertion and constantly sought to offload the laborious and mentally taxing jobs onto others. I didn't want to worry or trouble myself any more than necessary. Because I was slapdash in my duty, the problems of new believers weren't resolved promptly, which made some of them

unwilling to gather, and this in turn disturbed and hindered the watering work. I realized that I was living by satanic philosophies and laws, totally lacking in conscience or reason. I was selfish, despicable, and only cared about myself. I didn't even consider whether the difficulties of new believers could be resolved, or whether they suffered losses in their life entry. I had been living in a state of reveling in comfort, rebelling against and resisting God without even knowing it. How dangerous that was! At this point, I read this passage of God's word: **"God does not give people a load too heavy for them to bear. If you can carry one hundred pounds, God certainly will not give you a load heavier than one hundred pounds. He will not put pressure on you. This is how God is with everyone. And you will not be constrained by anything—any person or any thought and view. You are free"** (The Word, Vol. 6. On the Pursuit of the Truth I. What It Means to Pursue the Truth (15)). The loads that God gives to people are all things that they can bear, and can be achieved with just a little effort. Sometimes there may be more new believers to be watered than usual, with correspondingly more problems and difficulties that require more time and energy to seek the truth and fellowship to resolve them, but with a little more effort and sacrifice I can keep up. It won't make me collapse or fall ill from exhaustion at all. During gatherings, my brothers and sisters often fellowship on the fact that doing our duties is a good opportunity for us to understand the truth. We encounter various problems and difficulties in doing our duties, but by seeking the truth we can learn lessons from them and gradually understand some truths, and enter the truth reality. But I had always felt that doing my duty that way was too tiring, and even worried about falling ill from exhaustion, all because I craved comfort so much and had no will to suffer. I therefore complained and grumbled when going about my duty, neglected my work and even failed to fulfill my own

responsibilities. I finally recognized that living by satanic philosophies would only be a waste of my life and would only harm and ruin me in the end. This realization made me feel somewhat afraid, so I prayed to God, “Oh God, thank You for Your enlightenment and guidance, which has made me understand myself a little bit better, and clearly see the harm and consequences of living by satanic philosophies. I have also realized that Your righteous disposition cannot be offended. Oh God, I want to repent. From now on I will do my duty with both feet on the ground. I will no longer be perfunctory in my duty and hurt You.”

Later, I read another passage of God’s words that stirred me deeply. God’s words say: **“Every word and phrase that God had uttered was inscribed on Noah’s heart like words carved upon a stone tablet. Heedless of the changes in the outside world, of the ridicule of those around him, of the hardship involved, or of the difficulties he encountered, he persevered, throughout, in what had been entrusted to him by God, never despairing or thinking of giving up. God’s words were inscribed upon Noah’s heart, and they had become his everyday reality. Noah prepared each of the materials needed for building the ark, and the form and specifications for the ark commanded by God gradually took shape with each careful strike of Noah’s hammer and chisel. Throughout wind and rain, and regardless of how people mocked or slandered him, Noah’s life proceeded in this manner, year after year. God secretly watched Noah’s every action, without ever uttering another word to him, and His heart was touched by Noah. Noah, however, neither knew nor felt this; from start to finish, he simply built the ark, and assembled every kind of living creature, in unwavering fealty to God’s words. In Noah’s heart, there was no higher instruction that he ought to follow and carry out: God’s words were his**

lifelong direction and goal. So, no matter what God said to him, no matter what God asked him to do, commanded him to do, Noah completely accepted it, and took it to heart; he regarded it as the most important thing in his life, and handled it accordingly. He not only did not forget, he not only kept it in his heart, but also realized it in his daily life, using his life to accept and carry out God's commission. And in this way, plank by plank, the ark was built. Noah's every move, his every day, were dedicated to the words and commandments of God. It might not have seemed that Noah was performing a momentous undertaking, but in the eyes of God, everything Noah did, even every step he took to achieve something, every labor performed by his hand—they were all precious, and deserving of commemoration, and worthy of emulation by this mankind. Noah adhered to what had been entrusted to him by God. He was unwavering in his belief that every word uttered by God was true; of this, he had no doubt. And as a result, the ark came to completion, and every manner of living creature was able to live upon it" (The Word, Vol. 4. Exposing Antichrists. Excursus Two: How Noah and Abraham Obeyed God's Words and Submitted to Him (Part One)). I was very moved by Noah's attitude toward God's commission. God told Noah to build the ark, and he was absolutely obedient and submissive, leaving behind all the pleasures of the flesh to fulfill God's commission. Although building the ark was difficult, Noah had faith in God and was not afraid of suffering. He persisted in the face of every hardship and deprivation, ultimately fulfilling God's commission and receiving His approval. Compared with Noah, I realized that I was lacking humanity, disloyal and disobedient to my duty, lazy and deceitful. All I did was crave the comforts of the flesh, rather than taking my duty as an incumbent responsibility and trying my best to do it well. If things went on like this, my flesh would be at

ease, free from suffering and fatigue, but I would not gain the truth. Without the truth, would I not be a walking corpse? What is the point of living like this? Recognizing that my attitude toward my duty was so contemptuous, and that there was no way to atone for the losses I had caused to the church's work, I was filled with remorse and contrition. I secretly made up my mind that I could no longer indulge the flesh. I had to follow Noah's example and do my duty wholeheartedly and make it my personal responsibility to comfort God's heart, no matter what difficulties I encountered.

One month later, the leader decided to have me resume watering new believers. I was grateful and resolved that this time I would definitely do my duty properly and stop doing things based on corrupt dispositions. Worried that I would fall back into my old ways, I often prayed to God, asking Him to guide me and scrutinize me, and frequently reminding myself to treat my duty diligently. Thereafter, every time I held gatherings with new believers, I would patiently fellowship with them based on their problems and difficulties, helping them to understand the truth and resolving their religious notions. On the odd occasion when repeated fellowshipping failed to achieve results, I considered what I could say to make them understand. Gradually, my work started producing results, which made me feel at ease and at peace.

Being dismissed enabled me to better understand my own satanic nature, and changed my attitude toward doing my duty. I saw clearly that the consequences of being perfunctory toward one's duty and not pursuing the truth are perdition and destruction, and I had some fear of Him in my heart. This was all because of God's enlightenment and guidance. Thanks be to God!

81. I'm No Longer Picky About My Duty

By Liu Huizhen, China

When I first began believing in God, I noticed how brothers and sisters who were leaders would often fellowship with people on God's words to resolve their problems and brothers and sisters were willing to seek them out to discuss their issues. This made me very envious of them and I thought that doing such a duty would allow them to be respected and admired wherever they went. As for hosting and general affairs duties, I believed that the brothers and sisters doing these duties were just toiling behind the scenes, couldn't distinguish themselves, wouldn't be seen by others and no one admired them. I thought it would be so great if I could do a duty that allowed me to distinguish myself and be admired in the future. Later on, I was selected as a church leader and brothers and sisters at the gatherings I presided over were all very warm to me. It felt great to see how they looked at me with envy and I felt myself to be a cut above the rest. Doing a leadership duty was more stressful and involved much more work, but no matter how much I suffered or how tired I was, I never backed down or complained. Some time after that, due to my poor caliber and the fact that I didn't handle affairs according to principle—often acting based on my own opinions and sticking to regulations—and caused losses to the church's work, I was dismissed. After my dismissal, my leader came to me and asked if I would be willing to do a duty in general affairs. I felt a bit resistant and thought, "General affairs work is just handling various miscellaneous tasks in the church, it's just basic, manual labor. If the other brothers and sisters find out I am doing such a duty, what will they think of me? Will they think I am doing such a duty because I don't have the truth

reality?” However, knowing that a duty assignment was God’s commission and should be accepted and submitted to, I reluctantly agreed.

Later, when I went out to do my duty, I often ran into brothers and sisters I had known from before. When they asked me what duty I was doing, I would be embarrassed to tell them, worrying that they would look down on me if they knew I was doing a duty in general affairs. But what I feared most actually happened. One time, I went to a sister’s house to borrow her scooter and while chatting, I mentioned to her that I was doing a duty in general affairs. She was surprised and asked, “Why are you in general affairs now? I thought you were doing a text-based duty?” I felt incredibly awkward and intentionally changed the subject, making some small talk with her before leaving as quickly as possible. On my way home, I kept replaying in my mind the sister’s shocked expression when she heard I was in general affairs. I felt awful and wondered what the sister would think of me. Would she think that I had been assigned that duty because I lacked the truth reality and had poor caliber? Would she look down on me? This made me even more resistant toward that duty. Sometimes I would drag my feet about delivering urgent letters and wouldn’t get them to my brothers and sisters in a timely manner. Sometimes I was forgetful and my brothers and sisters pruned me for being perfunctory and irresponsible and reminded me to be more diligent in my duty and put more thought into it. Faced with this situation, I not only didn’t reflect on myself, I even became more resistant to the duty. I remembered how when I was a leader, general affairs workers delivered books of God’s words and letters to me, but now the tables had turned and it was I who was tasked with running errands and delivering things to other brothers and sisters. I felt like my status had suddenly plummeted and I became increasingly unhappy and oppressed.

One morning, my battery died while I was driving my electric scooter and I was forced to push the scooter manually. While pushing the scooter, I accidentally revved the accelerator and it shot forward, causing me to fall on top of it before I had time to react. I banged my mouth on the front edge of the scooter, which loosened a few of my teeth and left me with bruises on my face and caused an injury to my foot. After returning home, I prayed to God, “Oh God! Recently, I’ve been very resistant to my duty in general affairs and don’t know how to resolve this issue. Please guide me to know myself so that I can submit.” After prayer, I read two passages of God’s words that said: **“In the house of God, there is constant mention of accepting God’s commission and performing one’s duty properly. How does duty come into being? To speak broadly, it comes into being as a result of God’s management work of bringing salvation to humanity; to speak specifically, as God’s management work unfolds among mankind, various work appears that requires people to cooperate and complete it. This has given rise to responsibilities and missions for people to fulfill, and these responsibilities and missions are the duties God bestows upon mankind. In God’s house, the various tasks that require people’s cooperation are the duties they should perform. So, are there differences between duties in terms of better and worse, lofty and lowly, or great and small? Such differences do not exist; as long as something has to do with God’s management work, is a requirement of the work of His house, and is required by spreading God’s gospel, then it is a person’s duty”** (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. What Is the Adequate Performance of Duty?). **“Whatever your duty, do not discriminate between high and low. Suppose you say, ‘Though this task is a commission from God and the work of God’s house, if I do it, people might look down on me. Others get to do work that lets them stand out.**

I've been given this task, which doesn't let me stand out but makes me exert myself behind the scenes, it's unfair! I will not do this duty. My duty has to be one that makes me stand out in front of others and allows me to make a name for myself—and even if I don't make a name for myself or stand out, I still have to benefit from it and feel physically at ease.' Is this an acceptable attitude? Being picky is not accepting things from God; it is making choices according to your own preferences. This is not accepting your duty; it is a refusal of your duty, a manifestation of your rebelliousness against God. Such pickiness is adulterated with your individual preferences and desires. When you give consideration to your own benefit, your reputation, and so on, your attitude toward your duty is not submissive” (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. What Is the Adequate Performance of Duty?).

God's words were a clear exposure of my current state. I saw that my attitude toward and view of my duty was wrong. I distinguished between high and low duties, separating them into grades and ranks. I thought that being a leader or doing a text-based duty made one a cut above the rest and allowed one to attain admiration and respect from others. No matter how much I suffered or felt tired in such a duty, I was very willing to do it. As for duties that required manual labor and didn't allow me to distinguish myself and be seen, I wasn't willing to do them, thinking that such duties were clearly quite lowly and people would look down on me for doing them. Under the influence of these fallacious views, when assigned a general affairs duty by my leader, I felt that this was an inferior duty and would hurt my reputation, so I was resistant and unwilling to submit, and I acted perfunctorily and irresponsibly in the duty. How ridiculous my views were! Given how corrupted I was and how poor my caliber was, it was only with God's exaltation and grace that I was able to do a duty in the house of God, but I

didn't consider God's intentions at all, didn't know to repay God's love, only considered my own interests and reputation and just acted as I pleased in my duty, using it to serve my own interests. Where was my humanity? God surely loathed such conduct!

One day, I came across this passage of God's words: **"What attitude should you have toward your duty? First, you must not analyze it, trying to ascertain who it was that assigned it to you; instead, you should accept it from God, as a duty entrusted to you by God, and you should obey the orchestration and arrangements of God, and accept your duty from God. Second, do not discriminate between high and low, and do not concern yourself with its nature, whether it lets you stand out or not, whether it is done in public view or behind the scenes. Do not consider these things. There is also another attitude: submission and active cooperation"** (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days.

What Is the Adequate Performance of Duty?). Through reading God's words, I learned that our duties are God's commission and are our obligation and responsibility to fulfill. Regardless of whether the duty allows us to distinguish ourselves and be seen and whether it wins us the respect and admiration of others, as created beings, we should accept such duties and submit, and show our utmost loyalty. This is the kind of attitude we should have in our duties and the reason we should all possess. I thought about how general affairs might not be a flashy duty, but it is an indispensable aspect of the work of God's house. If we didn't have people delivering books and letters, our brothers and sisters wouldn't be able to read God's words in a timely fashion and certain projects wouldn't be completed in a timely fashion, which would impact the church's work. Given that I had been assigned a general affairs duty, I should have taken it as my responsibility to complete the tasks assigned to me. Having realized this, I

was finally willing to accept and submit. Whether or not I would be respected by others, I would still do my best to fulfill my duty. After that, I put all my energy and thought into my duty. Each day when it came time to send and receive letters, I would dutifully check over them and put my heart into my work. When the sister I was partnered with had to go out to handle other work, I would actively help forward things for her and put effort into doing my work well. I felt particularly at ease working in this diligent and detailed fashion. When other brothers and sisters asked me what duty I was doing, I would forthrightly state that I was working in general affairs and no longer felt embarrassed.

In June of 2019, my leader sought me out to ask me if I'd be willing to host a few sisters. I thought to myself, "I'm willing to accept a duty, but if my close brothers and sisters find out I've been spending my days scrubbing dishes and cooking food as a host, what will they think of me? Will they look down on me?" I hurriedly recommended Sister Wang Yun, saying I thought she would be more suited to this duty, but the leader replied that Sister Wang Yun had been sick recently and wasn't suitable. I realized that this duty had come to me through God's sovereignty and arrangements, so I stopped trying to put it off. During my time hosting, I noticed that the sisters would often fellowship about skills and knowledge relevant to their duties and what they gained from their experiences. When their supervisor came, she would also fellowship with the sisters about their work. I was envious of them for being able to do such a duty while I was stuck upholding the safety of my house environment or preparing food in the kitchen. That sense of inferiority left me feeling very unhappy. Sometimes my mind would be elsewhere while preparing food and I'd add too much salt or forget to add the salt entirely. Some of the sisters couldn't eat spicy food, so one of the sisters kindly asked me if I could put aside

some of the food before adding the hot peppers. I assented to her request, but in my mind I thought, “Back when I was a leader, I was the one calling the shots. Now that I’m doing this hosting duty, not only am I unable to earn respect from others, I also have to follow other people’s orders.” This made me feel sullen and oppressed. Sometimes when the sisters were busy with their duties, they would ask me to help them purchase various daily necessities, which made me feel like I was being ordered around and was just there to run errands. Later, I realized that I was in a bad state, but I would still often live in that state in spite of myself. I felt awful and it seemed that my heart had strayed from God.

One day, I read two passages of God’s words that said: **“Born into such a filthy land, man has been severely blighted by society, he has been influenced by feudal ethics, and he has been taught at ‘institutes of higher learning.’ The backward thinking, corrupt morality, mean view on life, despicable philosophy for worldly dealings, utterly worthless existence, and depraved lifestyle and customs—all of these things have severely intruded upon man’s heart, and severely undermined and attacked his conscience. As a result, man is ever more distant from God, and ever more opposed to Him”** (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. To Have an Unchanged Disposition Is to Be in Enmity to God). **“Satan corrupts people through the education and influence of national governments and of the famous and great. Their devilish words have become man’s life and nature. ‘Every man for himself and the devil take the hindmost’ is a well-known satanic saying that has been instilled into everyone, and this has become man’s life. There are other words of philosophies for worldly dealings that are also like this. Satan uses each nation’s traditional culture to educate, mislead, and corrupt people, causing mankind to fall into and be engulfed by a boundless**

abyss of destruction, and in the end, people are destroyed by God because they serve Satan and resist God. ... There are still many satanic poisons in people's lives, conduct, and behavior. For example, their philosophies for worldly dealings, their ways of doing things, and their maxims are all filled with the poisons of the great red dragon, and these all come from Satan. Thus, all things that flow through people's bones and blood are of Satan" (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. How to Know Man's Nature). Through reading God's words, I realized what was at the root of my distinguishing between high and low duties, and separating them into grades and ranks—I had been deeply inculcated and corrupted by satanic poisons like "Every man for himself and the devil take the hindmost," "Those who toil with their minds govern others, and those who toil with their hands are governed by others," and "Man struggles upward; water flows downward." I lived according to these satanic poisons, seeking fame, gain, status and respect. I thought that only living in that way was dignified and honorable. I also thought of the duties of the house of God in terms of satanic philosophy and views, believing that duties that required skill and talent like being a leader, working on texts, and producing videos were respected by people, while manual labor duties like hosting and doing general affairs were inferior. Influenced by fallacious views, I became perfunctory in my duty, was unfocused, often forgot to forward letters and delayed the work all because I thought that the duty wasn't respected. The food I prepared was either too bland or too salty and I didn't consider whether or not my sisters would be able to eat it, preferring just to make the food as I wanted to. When the sisters asked me to purchase things for them, I thought they were just treating me like a gofer and intentionally procrastinated. I saw that satanic poisons had already taken root deep within my heart and had become my very nature, causing me to become selfish,

despicable and lacking in humanity. I treated my duty as a way of attaining status and reputation and wanted to use my duty as an opportunity to win respect and plaudits from my brothers and sisters. I was cheating and resisting God! I realized that I was in a very dangerous state, so I prayed to God in repentance, “Oh God, I don’t want to pursue fame, gain and status any longer. I am ready to repent to You. Please, guide me in finding a path of practice.”

After that, I came across two passages of God’s words: **“Everybody is equal before the truth, and there are no distinctions of age or of lowliness and nobleness for those doing their duties in God’s house. Everybody is equal before their duty, they just do different jobs. There are no distinctions between them based on who has seniority. Before the truth, everybody should keep a humble, submissive, and accepting heart. People should be possessed of this reason and this attitude”** (The Word, Vol. 4. Exposing Antichrists. Item Nine (Part Eight)). **“When God requires that people fulfill their duty well, He is not asking them to complete a certain number of tasks or accomplish any great endeavors, nor to perform any great undertakings. What God wants is for people to be able to do all they can in a down-to-earth way, and live in accordance with His words. God does not need you to be great or noble, or bring about any miracles, nor does He want to see any pleasant surprises in you. He does not need such things. All God needs is for you to steadfastly practice according to His words. When you listen to God’s words, do what you have understood, carry out what you have comprehended, remember well what you have heard, and then, when the time comes to practice, do so according to God’s words. Let them become your life, your realities, and what you live out. Thus, God will be satisfied. ... Performing your duty isn’t actually difficult, nor is it**

hard to do so loyally, and to an acceptable standard. You don't have to sacrifice your life or do anything special or difficult, you merely have to follow the words and instructions of God honestly and steadfastly, not adding your own ideas or running your own operation, but walking the path of pursuing the truth. If people can do this, they will basically have a human semblance. When they have true submission to God, and have become an honest person, they will possess the likeness of a true human being" (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. The Proper Fulfillment of Duty Requires Harmonious Cooperation). In truth, no matter what duty we do in the house of God, be it a leadership duty, a text-based duty or serving as a host or working in general affairs, these are all just different jobs and no one of them is higher or lower than the other. No matter what duty we do, we are all accepting God's commission and serving our function as created beings. God would not think particularly highly of someone just because they have talent, skills or do some special duty. Likewise, He would not look down on someone just because they do a less flashy duty. What God cares about is whether people pursue the truth in the course of their duty and whether they submit and are loyal in their duties. The church had assigned me to serve as a host, so this was a responsibility and duty that I should fulfill. Regardless of whether people would think highly of me, I should accept it and submit—this was the reason that I ought to have. I thought of how of the myriad things God has created, be they great or small, they all exist in accordance with God's sovereignty and ordainment and serve whatever function God has given to them. A small blade of grass doesn't compare its height to a towering tree, nor does it compete with flowers over which is prettier; it just obediently serves its function. If I could be like that blade of grass, submitting to God's sovereignty and arrangements, conducting myself in a down-to-earth manner and seeking to

fulfill my role as a created being, I wouldn't suffer so much over not attaining status. What's more, being a leader in God's house is not all about ordering people around as I believed, it requires one to be a servant to all people, fellowshiping the truth to help brothers and sisters, resolving their real issues with life entry and guiding them into the reality of God's words. The hosting duty is also not an inferior duty—it requires one to do one's duty in maintaining the hosting environment so that brothers and sisters can do their duty in peace. Each of us does our part in our role to expand the kingdom gospel. Realizing all this, I felt a sense of liberation. The house of God assigns people to duties based upon their skills, caliber and stature. I had previously served in leadership and text-based duties, but my caliber was insufficient, I wasn't up to the tasks and unsuited to those roles. Yet, I didn't really understand myself, always thinking very highly of myself and seeking the respect of others. How unreasonable I was being! The church assigned me to do a hosting duty based on my caliber and my house environment—this duty was very suitable for me. I wasn't highly respected for my role as a host, but the duty revealed my mistaken views on pursuit and my corrupt disposition and spurred me to seek the truth and gain some understanding of myself. This is the most valuable thing I could gain from this duty. I thanked God from the bottom of my heart for orchestrating this environment to purify and transform me, and I became willing to submit to His orchestrations and arrangements, fulfilling my hosting duty to repay His love.

Later on, I began to seek to enter into principles in the way I prepared food for my sisters, considering what kind of meals would be most beneficial to their health. When they weren't busy, they'd help me with housework and didn't order me around like an inferior at all. When I encountered difficulties in my duty, they would patiently fellowship with

me and support me and we all played our part in our roles. In this way, I began to have a more harmonious relationship with the sisters, and I was happily willing to do my duty. These gains and changes were all the result of the judgment and chastisement of God's words.

82. The Pain of Telling Lies

By Ronald, Myanmar

In October 2019, I accepted the work of Almighty God of the last days. At gatherings I saw brothers and sisters were able to fellowship on their experiences and understanding. They were able to open up about all their corruption and shortcomings without any misgivings, and I was so envious. I wanted to be an honest person too and to simply open up like they did, but when it actually came down to it, I just couldn't speak honestly. One time, my brothers and sisters asked me, "You're young, are you still a student?" The truth was I hadn't been a student for quite a while, and I just cooked and cleaned at a restaurant, but I feared that the others would look down on me once they knew this, so I told them I was still a student. I didn't think much of it once I'd said it, and I just moved on. One day, I saw a passage of God's word in an experiential testimony video that made me reflect on myself. God's word says: **"You ought to know that God likes those who are honest. In essence, God is faithful, and so His words can always be trusted; His actions, furthermore, are faultless and unquestionable, which is why God likes those who are absolutely honest with Him. Honesty means giving your heart to God, being genuine with God in all things, being open with Him in all things, never hiding the facts, not trying to deceive those above and below you, and not doing things only to curry favor with God. In short, to be honest is to be pure in your actions and words, and to deceive neither God nor man"** (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. Three Admonitions). After reading God's words, I understood that God likes honest people, that honest people can simply open up to God, that they are unequivocal in the things they do and say, and that they do not try to deceive either God or other

people. But as for me, when others asked me “Are you still a student?” I couldn’t even tell the truth, let alone be an honest person before God. I wasn’t honest at all! So I wanted to open up to the others, but I was scared they would mock me, yet, at the same time, not speaking up made me feel deeply uneasy. So I prayed to God, asking Him to help me practice telling the truth and being an honest person. At a later gathering, I opened up about my corruption and exposed my intention to use lies and deceit. Not only did the others not look down on me, they even messaged me saying my experience was good. This gave me more confidence to be an honest person. Despite having practiced being an honest person and telling the truth on this occasion, I still had no awareness of my satanic disposition, and when it came to things concerning my reputation and interests, I still couldn’t help but disguise myself.

After a period of time, I was chosen to be a preacher and I was responsible for the work of three churches. During a co-worker gathering, a leader wanted to know the specifics of how newcomers were being watered in each church, and asked us why some newcomers hadn’t been supported properly. I started to get a little flustered, as I only knew how things were going in one of the churches and not in the other two. So what was I supposed to say? If I told the truth, what would everyone think of me? Would they wonder if I could be a preacher if I couldn’t even get this straight? Or would they say that I didn’t do real work and that I was incapable of this duty? It’d be so embarrassing if I were transferred or dismissed! I just wanted to run away, but if I signed off early, I was afraid of being found out. So I had no choice but to stay and listen as other preachers talked about the work they were responsible for. I was like a cat on a hot tin roof and didn’t know what to do. When the leader called my name, I was so nervous, and pretended I hadn’t heard him, asking, “What

did you say?" The leader said, "We were just talking about watering newcomers, and you heard what everyone said just now. Would you care to tell us about your newcomers?" My heart was in turmoil. I had no choice but to talk about the church I did know about first, but I didn't want to talk about the other two. However, I feared everyone would know I hadn't done follow-up work, so I gritted my teeth and lied, saying "A lot of the newcomers in the second church aren't being supported properly, and because of the pandemic, we can't reach them. I'm not too sure about the situation in the third church because I've been following up on the work of the other two churches this whole time." I felt very uneasy to have said this, and I was terrified of everyone seeing through my lie, which would have been even more humiliating. I was on edge for the whole gathering and was only able to breathe a sigh of relief after it ended. To my surprise, the leader then asked me separately, "About those newcomers that aren't being supported properly because of the pandemic, have you asked the waterers to call them and check up on them?" I was stumped by the leader's question. I didn't know the specifics of the situation. If I told the truth, wouldn't the leader realize I had lied? I couldn't say I didn't know. So I just kept on lying, "I've talked to them about it, but some of the newcomers didn't answer their phones." The leader then asked, "Which newcomers?" I thought to myself, "Does the leader keep questioning me because he found out I lied?" I replied hastily, "I think it's some of those who have just accepted God's work." Seeing that I couldn't explain clearly, the leader resignedly said, "Well, when you do find out, let me know." When I got off the call, I felt a deep sense of guilt. I'd lied and deceived once again. Once I told a lie, I had to use several more lies to patch up it. What a hassle it is to use lies to cover up other lies. Thinking back on the gathering, one preacher had said that of the three churches he was responsible for, he hadn't looked

into one of them. He'd been able to speak the truth, so why couldn't I say a single honest word? I lied, deceived, and put up a false appearance like this, but I couldn't deceive God, as God scrutinizes all. I was so perfunctory in my duty, and sooner or later I would be revealed. So I prayed to God, "God, in the gathering today, when the leader was inquiring about the work, I didn't tell the truth. I feared that everyone would look down on me and say I didn't do real work if they knew the truth. God, please guide me to know myself and cast off my corrupt disposition."

I later read a passage of God's word: **"In their everyday lives, people often talk nonsense, tell lies, and say things that are ignorant, foolish, and defensive. Most of these things are said for the sake of vanity and pride, to satisfy their own egos. Speaking such falsehoods reveals their corrupt dispositions. If you were to resolve these corrupt elements, your heart would be purified, and you would gradually become purer and more honest. In reality, people all know why they lie. For the sake of personal gain and pride, or for vanity and status, they try to compete with others and pass themselves off as something that they're not. However, their lies are eventually revealed and exposed by others, and they end up losing face, as well as their dignity and character. This is all caused by an excessive amount of lies. Your lies have become too numerous. Every word you say is adulterated and insincere, and not a single one can be considered true or honest. Even though you don't feel that you've lost face when you tell lies, deep down, you feel disgraced. Your conscience blames you, and you hold a low opinion of yourself, thinking, 'Why am I living such a pitiful life? Is it so difficult to speak the truth? Must I resort to lies for the sake of my pride? Why is my life so exhausting?' You don't have to live an exhausting life. If you can practice being an honest person, you will be able to live a relaxed, free,**

and liberated life. However, you have chosen to uphold your pride and vanity by telling lies. Consequently, you live a tiresome and miserable existence, which is self-inflicted. One may gain a sense of pride by telling lies, but what is that sense of pride? It is just an empty thing, and it is completely worthless. Telling lies means selling out one's character and dignity. It strips away one's dignity and one's character; it displeases God, and He detests it. Is this worthwhile? It is not. Is this the correct path? No, it is not. People who frequently lie live according to their satanic dispositions; they live under Satan's power. They do not live in the light, nor do they live in the presence of God. You constantly think about how to lie and then after you lie, you have to think about how to cover up that lie. And when you do not cover up the lie well enough and it is exposed, you have to rack your brain to try and straighten out the contradictions and make it plausible. Is it not tiring to live in this way? Exhausting. Is it worth it? No, it is not worth it. Racking one's brain to tell lies and then to cover them up, all for the sake of pride, vanity, and status, what meaning is there in that? Finally, you reflect and think to yourself, 'What's the point? It's too exhausting to tell lies and to have to cover them up. Conducting myself in this manner won't work; it'd be easier if I just became an honest person.' You desire to become an honest person, but you cannot let go of your pride, vanity, and personal interests. Therefore, you can only resort to telling lies to uphold these things. ... If you think that lies can uphold the reputation, status, vanity, and pride you desire, you are completely mistaken. In reality, by telling lies, not only do you fail to maintain your vanity and pride, and your dignity and character, more grievously, you miss the opportunity to practice the truth and be an honest person. Even if you manage to protect your reputation, status,

vanity, and pride at that moment, you have sacrificed the truth and betrayed God. This means you have completely lost your chance for Him to save and perfect you, which is the greatest loss and a lifelong regret. Those who are deceitful will never understand this” (The Word, Vol.

3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. Only an Honest Person Can Live Out True Human Likeness). What God’s words exposed was exactly my state. The leader wanted to know about the watering situation in each church, which was clearly a simple matter, and it would have been fine just to tell the truth, but for me nothing could have been harder. I was filled with misgivings, and feared that after the leader and other preachers found out the truth, they would say I didn’t do real work, and couldn’t even get to grips with this small matter. And if I was dismissed, that would be humiliating! To protect my reputation, status, and the good impression others had of me, I lied about having looked into two churches, when I only had an understanding of one. I even went into detail on the second church, saying that the newcomers there weren’t being supported properly because of the pandemic. Wasn’t this just a barefaced lie? When the leader asked me if I’d asked the waterers to call the newcomers, I feared the leader finding out about the lie I’d just told, so I cooked up a second lie to cover for the first, and I made up an excuse to fob him off. To protect my name and status, I used one lie to patch up another. I was truly deceitful! I thought about a dialogue between God and Satan recorded in the Bible. God asked Satan where it came from, to which Satan replied, “From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it” (Job 1:7). Satan is so cunning. It didn’t answer God’s question directly and talked in a winding and meandering way. It’s impossible to tell where Satan came from. Its mouth is filled with only lies, it never speaks honestly, and it only ever talks equivocally and ambiguously. With my lying and deception, was I not the

same as the devil Satan? Even though I gave an answer to the leader, it was all vague and unclear, full of lies and deceit. Having heard my answer, the leader was still unclear on the exact state of the watering work I was responsible for, and he couldn't judge if I was following up properly. In fact, my lying and deceiving like this only preserved my reputation and status temporarily, but what I really lost was my integrity, dignity, and the trust of others. If I kept going on like this, sooner or later, everyone would see that I wasn't an honest person and was untrustworthy. Nobody would believe in me, and moreover, God would not trust in me. Wouldn't I be completely bereft of integrity and dignity then? Wouldn't this be stupid of me?

Then, I read another passage of God's word: **"That God asks for people to be honest proves that He truly loathes and dislikes deceitful people. God's dislike of deceitful people is a dislike of their way of doing things, their dispositions, their intents and their methods of trickery; God dislikes all of these things. If deceitful people are able to accept the truth, admit to their deceitful dispositions, and are willing to accept God's salvation, then they too have a hope of being saved—for God treats all people equally, as does the truth. And so, if we wish to become people who please God, the first thing we must do is change our principles of comportment. No longer can we live according to satanic philosophies, no longer can we get by on lies and trickery. We must cast off all our lies and become honest people. Then God's view of us will change. Previously, people always relied on lies, pretense, and trickery while living among others, and used satanic philosophies as the basis of their existence, their lives, and the foundation for their comportment. This was something that God loathed. Among nonbelievers, if you speak frankly, tell the truth, and are an honest**

person, then you will be slandered, judged, and forsaken. So you follow worldly trends and live by satanic philosophies; you become more and more skilled at lying, and more and more deceitful. You also learn to use insidious means to achieve your goals and protect yourself. You become more and more prosperous in Satan's world, and as a result, you fall deeper and deeper into sin until you cannot extricate yourself. In God's house, things are precisely the opposite. The more you lie and play deceitful games, the more God's chosen people will become sick of you and forsake you. If you refuse to repent and still cling to satanic philosophies and logic, if you use ploys and elaborate schemes to disguise and package yourself, then you are very likely to be revealed and eliminated. This is because God loathes deceitful people. Only honest people can prosper in God's house, and deceitful people will eventually be forsaken and eliminated. All of this is preordained by God. Only honest people can have a share in the kingdom of heaven. If you do not try to be an honest person, and if you don't experience and practice in the direction of pursuing the truth, if you don't expose your own ugliness, and if you don't lay yourself bare, then you will never be able to receive the Holy Spirit's work and gain God's approval" (The

Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. The Most Fundamental Practice of Being an Honest Person). Thinking over God's words, I realized God does not like deceitful people, and He does not save them. Because they belong to Satan, deceitful people use deceit and tricks in all the things they do, and they speak without honesty all to protect their reputation, status, and interests. The intents these people harbor and the methods they use are odious and disgusting to God. Though I believed in God, I hadn't gained any truth and still lived by satanic philosophies such as "Every man for himself and the devil take the hindmost," and "People need their pride just as a tree needs

its bark.” These satanic philosophies had already rooted themselves in my heart, misleading and corrupting me, and making me walk the path of pursuing fame, gain, and status. I’d thought that people should live for themselves, stand out among others, and gain renown and profit, and that only then will a person not be looked down on. I’d thought that if a person only ever told the truth and never lied, then that person was a fool. Because of this, I’d always deceived, and sewn a web of lies for the sake of my own interests, becoming more and more deceitful, fake, and lacking in normal human likeness. I’d viewed reputation and status as more important than the truth, and was willing to lie and go against the truth to protect my reputation and status. Satan is a liar, so when I lie and deceive like this, am I not the same? In this evil world, being an honest, guileless person just doesn’t cut it. But in the house of God it’s quite the opposite. In the house of God, righteousness and the truth reign supreme, and the more a person deceives, the more likely they are to fall, and eventually, all deceitful people will be revealed and eliminated by God. God says: **“If people wish to be saved, then they must start by being honest”** (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. Six Indicators of Life Growth). **“Only honest people can have a share in the kingdom of heaven”** (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. The Most Fundamental Practice of Being an Honest Person). God is holy, and filthy people are not allowed to enter the kingdom of heaven. When I realized this, I felt that God’s holy and righteous disposition does not tolerate offense, and I truly regretted lying to my brothers and sisters. I truly hated myself and I never wanted to lie or deceive again. I wanted to practice the truth, be an honest person, and speak honestly with everyone. I wanted to pull the lies from my mouth and the deceit from my heart. Only by doing so would I be worthy of God’s approval and have an opportunity to gain the truth and be saved.

During one of my devotionals, I read a passage of God's word: **"Practicing honesty covers many aspects. In other words, the standard for being honest is not merely achieved through one regard; you must be up to standard in many regards before you can be honest. Some people always think that they need only manage not to lie in order to be honest. Is this view correct? Does being honest merely involve not lying? No—it also relates to several other aspects. Firstly, no matter what you are faced with, be it something you have seen with your own eyes or something someone else has told you, be it interacting with people or sorting out a problem, be it the duty you ought to be performing or something that God has entrusted to you, you must always approach it with an honest heart. How should one practice approaching things with an honest heart? Say what you think and speak honestly; do not speak empty, pompous, or pleasant-sounding words, do not say flattering or hypocritical false things, but speak the words that are in your heart. This is being someone honest. Expressing the true thoughts and views that are in your heart—this is what honest people are supposed to do. If you never say what you think, and the words fester in your heart, and what you say is always at odds with what you think, that is not what an honest person does"** (The Word, Vol. 3.

The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. Only an Honest Person Can Live Out True Human Likeness). God's word gave me a path of practice. Whether it was interacting with others or doing my duty, I must have an honest heart in my approach. Since I had not done follow-up work, I should just say so and be honest about it. I shouldn't be thinking about whether my reputation would be harmed. Practicing being an honest person is key. At the next co-worker gathering, I wanted to take the initiative and expose my corruption, but I worried about what everyone would think of me. I realized that I was

wanting to safeguard my reputation and status again, and so I said a silent prayer to God, asking Him to guide me, give me strength, and grant me the courage to expose my corruption, practicing the truth and being an honest person. I remembered a passage of God's word I'd read before: **"If you do not practice according to God's words, and never dissect your secrets and your challenges, and never open yourself in fellowship to others, neither fellowshiping nor dissecting nor bringing to light your corruption and fatal flaws with them, then you cannot be saved"** (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. The Most Fundamental Practice of Being an Honest Person). I realized that if I wasn't an honest person, kept covering up my corruption and shortcomings, didn't open up, reveal, or dissect myself, then I would never cast off my corrupt disposition, and I would never be saved. I said another prayer to God in my heart, "God! Please give me strength so that I can simply open up and be an honest person." After my prayer, I took the initiative to come clean to the other brothers and sisters, saying that I lied and deceived everyone at the last gathering when the leader was asking about the watering of the newcomers.... After I said this, they neither rebuked nor looked down on me. On the contrary, they said it was good that I was able to simply open up and be an honest person. Having practiced like this, I felt much more settled and at ease.

Not long after, an upper leader asked me, "Do you currently have an understanding of the states of the church leaders?" I felt a little unconfident at this question, as I was only aware of the state of one church leader, but not of the states of the other two. I thought to myself, "If I tell the truth, will the leader say I haven't done real work?" And so I wanted to say I did have an understanding. I then realized I was wanting to lie again, so I said a prayer to God. Then I told the truth, "I only know of the state of one church leader, and not of the states of the other two." At this, the leader didn't

criticize me, and gave me some suggestions instead, saying that I should care more regularly about the states of the church leaders, and help promptly resolve their difficulties if they had any, and the leader also fellowshiped with me about some paths for doing the work. I learned that when I spoke the truth, was being an honest person, and dared to expose my corruption and shortcomings, not only was I able to be helped by my brothers and sisters and make gains, but it was also beneficial to the church's work and to my life growth. Before, I lied and used deceit to safeguard my reputation and status, but after I said each lie, my heart felt burdened and my conscience felt accused, and most importantly, I lost my integrity and my dignity, and I was also loathed and hated by God. Through this experience, I have come to understand that honest people are liked by both God and man, and that the more honest we are, the more harmonious our relations with others will be, and the more settled and at peace we will be. Not only will others not look down on us, but we will be helped by our brothers and sisters instead. Being an honest person is truly great!

83. Why Don't I Share Everything When Teaching Others?

By Aiden, Italy

In July 2021, I was doing video production in the church. I knew this was a really important duty, so I spent lots of time every day watching tutorials and searching for information. I listened carefully whenever others discussed a technical skill, and afterward would analyze and research it in detail, then actually make use of it. I also prayed to and sought help from God when I encountered difficulties. After fumbling around for a time, my technical skills improved quite a bit. I was coming up with some novel production styles and working more efficiently. Everyone really looked up to me and would come ask me about technical issues. I had a real sense of accomplishment. I felt like all my hard work hadn't been in vain, that I was finally seeing the fruit of it.

Seeing how well I was doing in video production, the supervisor asked me to share my technical skills and production experience with brothers and sisters. Even some members from other teams specially requested to listen to me talk. I felt very happy to be able to show my face. But I started to worry when I considered sharing the keys to my success. I thought, "If I reveal the essence of these skills and everyone learns them, they'll gradually become more effective in their work. Then will anyone come ask me for help anymore? Will they still look up to me? I shouldn't tell them everything." So, I explained some things, but kept some to myself. I knew that wasn't the right thing to do, but I'd swallow what was on the tip of my tongue, for my own interests. Later, a sister said to me, "The videos made based on your instructions are a lot better than before, but we're still inefficient. Is there anything you haven't taught us yet?" I responded

nonchalantly, “That’s the way I do it. Maybe you need more practice to become more efficient?” She didn’t say anything further. At the time I felt kind of bad and I realized this was being deceitful, but when I thought about how I was being more effective in my work than the others, I smothered that little shred of guilt.

After a period of time, I produced the most videos, and they were of the best quality. I was very pleased with myself to see those figures, and felt happy that I hadn’t decided to teach the others the full extent of my skills. Then I wouldn’t have had the best figures. Just when I was feeling very self-satisfied, the supervisor found out that I hadn’t shared all my skills with the others, and pruned me, “You’re so selfish! You’re not thinking of the church’s work, only your own productivity. You just want to show off. How much can you accomplish on your own? If everyone knew these skills, we could improve our overall work progress.” I was aware that it would benefit the church’s work, but when I thought of everyone else becoming more competent and no longer admiring me, I felt really conflicted. I prayed, “Oh God! Recently I couldn’t help acting deceitfully for my own interests. I don’t want to live in this corruption anymore. Please guide me to understand my problem and cast off this corrupt disposition.”

Then in my devotionals, I read this in God’s words: **“Nonbelievers have a certain kind of corrupt disposition. When they teach other people a piece of professional knowledge or a skill, they think, ‘Once a student knows everything the master knows, the master will lose his livelihood. If I teach everything I know to others, then no one will look up to me or admire me anymore and I will have lost all my status as a teacher. This will not do. I can’t teach them everything I know, I must hold something back. I’ll teach them only eighty percent of what I know and keep the rest up my sleeve; this is the only way to show that**

my skills are superior to those of others.’ What sort of disposition is this? It is deceitfulness. When teaching others, assisting them, or sharing with them something you studied, what attitude should you take? (I should spare no effort and hold nothing back.) ... If you contribute your gifts and talents in their entirety, they will be beneficial to all those who do that duty, and to the work of the church. Do not just tell everyone some simple things and then think that you’ve done quite well or that you have not held anything back—this will not do. You only teach a few theories or things that people can understand literally, but the essence and important points are beyond the grasp of a novice. You only give an overview, without elaborating or going into detail, all the while still thinking to yourself, ‘Well, anyway, I’ve told you, and I haven’t intentionally held anything back. If you don’t understand, it’s because your caliber is too poor, so don’t blame me. We’ll just have to see how God leads you now.’ Such deliberation contains deceit, does it not? Is it not selfish and despicable? Why can’t you teach people everything in your heart and everything you understand? Why do you withhold knowledge instead? This is a problem with your intentions and your disposition. ... It is too tiring if people do not pursue the truth and live by satanic dispositions like the nonbelievers. Competition is rife among nonbelievers. Mastering the essence of a skill or a profession is no simple matter, and once someone else finds out about it, and masters it themselves, your livelihood will be at risk. In order to protect that livelihood, people are driven to act in this way—they must be cautious at all times. What they’ve mastered is their most valuable currency, it’s their livelihood, their capital, their lifeblood, and they mustn’t let anyone else in on it. But you believe in God—if you think this way and act this way in God’s house, there is nothing to distinguish

you from a nonbeliever” (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. Part Three). Reading this passage felt like God was directly judging and exposing me. I saw that after years of faith, my life disposition hadn't changed at all. I was just like a nonbeliever, living by satanic rules for survival, like “Every man for himself and the devil take the hindmost” and “Once a student knows everything the master knows, the master will lose his livelihood.” When I had some skills or special techniques, I wanted to keep them to myself. I wouldn't agree to teach everything to someone else that easily and risk losing my position and livelihood. During that time, when I had more technical skills than the others and was more productive in my duty, I was quite self-contented and reveled in being looked up to. The supervisor asked me to share my skills, but I didn't tell them everything so I could keep my position. I was afraid that the others would surpass me if they learned everything, then no one would admire me anymore. Even when the sister came and asked me things individually, I would hide the truth, not telling her everything. I was practicing the satanic philosophy of “Once a student knows everything the master knows, the master will lose his livelihood.” For reputation and status, I was deceitful and played games, afraid that if others fully mastered my key skills, I wouldn't have a chance to show off anymore. I didn't consider the church's work at all, and I wasn't considerate of God's intentions. I treated these skills like my own personal tools to maintain my reputation and status. I was so selfish, vile, and lacking in humanity! I prayed to God, ready to put the truth into practice and rebel against the flesh. I thought of something God says: **“When most people are first introduced to some specific aspect of professional knowledge, they can only comprehend its literal meaning; it takes a period of practice before the main points and essence can be grasped. If you have already mastered these finer points, you should tell them to**

others directly; do not make them take such a roundabout path and spend so much time groping around. This is your responsibility; it is what you should do. You will only not be withholding anything, and not be selfish, if you tell them what you believe to be the main points and essence” (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. Part Three). God’s words gave me a path of practice: I should share all my key techniques and knowledge related to our work with the brothers and sisters, so no one would need to waste more time on roundabout approaches. Then they could have more inspirations based on that foundation and keep getting better at their duty. That would benefit the church’s work. Besides, I had some professional skills and was reasonably effective in my duty not because I was smarter or more driven than the others, but because of God’s grace, granting me this bit of inspiration. I couldn’t only think of my own interests, but had to fulfill my responsibilities, and share all of my knowledge with the others. Then our work as a whole would improve. And so, I taught all the professional skills I knew to the brothers and sisters, and told them of my own accord when I discovered another good technique. After a little while, our team’s productivity just skyrocketed, and some of us came up with innovations based on the skills I had taught them.

A month later, because of staff changes, the supervisor had team leader Colin take over a new team and had me take on his role. I was really grateful to God and wanted to do the job well. Since the brothers and sisters in Colin’s team were all new to video editing and inexperienced, he had a few of them with good caliber come to learn from us. They were all quick learners, and it wasn’t long before they had a good handle on the skills and were getting better at their duty. I felt out of sorts, thinking, “We’ve shared everything with you. If this goes on and your team’s effectiveness continues to improve, won’t our team be outdone by yours?” So, I removed the ones

who had come to learn from the online group. I also began studying the productive techniques and skills of other churches. My thinking was that they already learned all the skills we had known before, so if we learned some new ones and didn't tell them, they wouldn't be able to outdo us. But to my surprise, after I removed them from the group, not only did our team's productivity not increase, it actually fell. The team members experienced more negative states and issues, and I myself was in a fog. I didn't have any ideas for making videos and I couldn't resolve the team's problems. I realized that if I didn't change my state, that was sure to impact the team's performance. I prayed to God, "God, in my duty lately, no matter how hard I try, I'm just directionless. Please enlighten and guide me to know myself and come out from this mess."

One day in my devotionals, I read this passage of God's words: **"When people live in an incorrect state, and do not pray to God or seek the truth, the Holy Spirit will abandon them, and God will not be present. How can those who do not seek the truth possess the work of the Holy Spirit? God detests them, so His face is hidden from them, and the Holy Spirit is concealed from them. When God is no longer at work, you can do as you please. Once He has cast you aside, aren't you finished? You'll accomplish nothing. Why is it that the nonbelievers have such a hard time doing things? Isn't it that they each keep their own counsel? They keep their own counsel, and are unable to accomplish anything—everything is highly strenuous, even the simplest of matters. This is life under the power of Satan. If you do as the nonbelievers do, then how are you any different from them? There is no difference whatsoever. If power in the church is wielded by those who do not have the truth, if it is wielded by those who are filled with satanic dispositions, then isn't it in fact Satan who wields power? If the**

actions of people who wield power in the church are all contrary to the truth, then the work of the Holy Spirit ceases, and God hands them over to Satan. Once in Satan's hands, all forms of ugliness—jealousies and disputes, for example—emerge between people. What is illustrated by these phenomena? That the work of the Holy Spirit has ceased, He has taken His leave, and God is no longer at work. Without the work of God, of what use are the mere words and doctrines that man understands? They are of no use. When a person no longer has the work of the Holy Spirit, they will be empty inside, they can't feel anything anymore, they are like the dead, and by this point, they will have become dumbfounded. All inspiration, wisdom, intelligence, insight, and enlightenment in mankind comes from God; it is all God's work" (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. Part Three). I could feel God's righteous disposition from His words. God has a different attitude toward people depending on their behavior. If someone has the right motive in their duty, seeks the truth, and bands together with the others to uphold the church's work, they gain the Holy Spirit's work. But if they don't practice the truth and live in their satanic dispositions, God abandons them in disgust. I thought of those brothers and sisters from the other team trying to learn from us. When I saw they were quick learners, I was afraid that we would fall behind them, so I removed them from the group, not letting them continue to participate in our trainings. I was acting just like a nonbeliever, playing tricks and leaving a way out—it was all for my own interests. I was always afraid others would outdo me, and that would impact my reputation and status. I was incredibly selfish and despicable. I read this in God's words: **"Without the work of God, of what use are the mere words and doctrines that man understands? They are of no use. When a person no longer has the work of the Holy Spirit, they will be empty inside, they**

can't feel anything anymore, they are like the dead, and by this point, they will have become dumbfounded." When I started that job, I wanted to learn the skills and do my duty well. I prayed to and sought help from God when I ran into problems, I learned quickly, and I never felt tired. But since I began living in a state of competitiveness, not seeking the truth, and acting out of corruption at every turn, God was disgusted and abandoned me. I lacked direction and purpose in my duty and felt inept in everything. I saw that when God wasn't working on me, what little professional knowledge I had became useless. This was the consequence of not having the right motives in my duty, always protecting my own interests, and not practicing the truth.

Then I thought of a passage of God's words, where God exposes how antichrists only consider their own interests, not thinking of the interests of God's house. God's words say: **"Regardless of what work they undertake, antichrists never give any thought to the interests of the house of God. They only consider whether their own interests will be affected, only think about the little bit of work in front of them that benefits them. For them, the primary work of the church is just something they do in their spare time. They don't take it seriously at all. They only move when they're prodded into action, only do what they like to do, and only do work that is for the sake of maintaining their own status and power. In their eyes, any work arranged by God's house, the work of spreading the gospel, and the life entry of God's chosen people are not important. No matter what difficulties other people have in their work, what issues they have identified and reported to them, how sincere their words are, the antichrists pay no heed, they do not get involved, it's as if this has nothing to do with them. No matter how major the problems emerging in the church's**

work are, they are utterly indifferent. Even when a problem is right in front of them, they only address it perfunctorily. Only when they are directly pruned by the Above and ordered to sort out a problem will they grudgingly do a little real work and give the Above something to see; soon after, they will continue with their own business. When it comes to the work of the church, to the important things of the wider context, they are disinterested in and disregard these things. They even ignore the problems they discover, and they give perfunctory answers or hem and haw when asked about problems, only addressing them with great reluctance. This is the manifestation of selfishness and vileness, is it not? What's more, no matter what duty antichrists are doing, all they think about is whether it will allow them to step into the limelight; as long as it will boost their reputation, they rack their brains to come up with a way to learn how to do it, to carry it out; all they care about is whether it will set them apart. No matter what they do or think, they are only concerned with their own fame, gain, and status. No matter what duty they are doing, they only compete over who is higher or lower, who wins and who loses, who has the bigger reputation. They only care about how many people worship and look up to them, how many people obey them, and how many followers they have. They never fellowship the truth or solve real problems. They never consider how to do things according to principle when doing their duty, nor do they reflect on whether they have been loyal, have fulfilled their responsibilities, whether there have been deviations or oversights in their work, or if any problems exist, much less do they give thought to what God asks, and what God's intentions are. They pay not the slightest attention to all these things. They only put their head down and do things for the sake of fame, gain, and status, to

satisfy their own ambitions and desires. This is the manifestation of selfishness and vileness, is it not? This fully exposes how their hearts brim with their own ambitions, desires, and senseless demands; everything they do is governed by their ambitions and desires. No matter what they do, the motivation and source is their own ambitions, desires, and senseless demands. This is the archetypal manifestation of selfishness and vileness” (The Word, Vol. 4. Exposing Antichrists. Excursus Four:

Summarizing the Character of Antichrists and Their Disposition Essence (Part One)). God's words expose that antichrists only do things for their own reputation and status without a thought for the church's work. The church's arrangements and the problems others are having in their duty don't matter to them at all. They turn a blind eye to any struggles the brothers and sisters are facing, they're really selfish and vile, and they lack all humanity. I looked at antichrists' behavior and reflected on how I appeared to suffer and pay a price and did my best to learn skills for my duty, but I wasn't considering God's intentions. I was treating my duty like a tool with which I could gain status and a good reputation. My only consideration was whether I had status among people, and whether the others would admire and value me. I never thought about what God required or how I should satisfy Him. When I attained some results in my duty and everyone was coming to me with questions, my desire for reputation and status was totally satisfied. When sharing my professional knowledge with others, I was deceitful, played games, and held back some of my key skills. I didn't share the full extent of my skills and removed the people who came to learn out of our group so they couldn't learn from us, as I was afraid they'd become capable and steal my thunder. I knew that we made videos to spread God's words, that I should have worked alongside the others with one heart and mind to do our duties well, so that more of those who long for God's appearance can come

before Him sooner, pursue the truth, and be saved, but for the sake of maintaining my own reputation and status, I wasn't willing to share my skills with anyone. I treated my professional skills and learning resources like my own personal property to enjoy by myself. I just wanted to show off and satisfy my ambition and desire to be admired by others. I didn't remotely consider the church's work or the intentions of God. How was my behavior any different from an antichrist's? This seemed like a really dangerous state, so I prayed in my heart, "Oh God! I don't want to keep ignoring my conscience and only thinking of my interests. I'm ready to repent, to teach everyone the skills I have, and to do my duty well."

Then I read this in God's words: **"If people don't understand the truth, then nothing is harder for them to give up than their own interests. That's because their life philosophies are 'Every man for himself and the devil take the hindmost' and 'Man dies for wealth as birds do for food.' Clearly, they live for their own interests. People think that without their own interests—that if they were to lose their interests—they wouldn't be able to survive. It's as if their survival is inseparable from their own interests, so most people are blind to all but their own interests. They see their own interests as higher than anything else, they live for their own interests, and getting them to give up their own interests is like asking them to give up their own lives. So, what should be done in such circumstances? People must accept the truth. Only when they understand the truth can they see through to the essence of their own interests; only then can they begin to relinquish and rebel against them, and be able to endure the pain of letting go of that which they love so much. And when you can do this and forsake your own interests, you will feel more at ease and more at peace in your heart, and in so doing you will have overcome the flesh. If you cling to**

your interests and refuse to give them up, and if you are not in the least bit accepting of the truth, in your heart, you may say, ‘What’s wrong with trying to benefit myself and refusing to suffer any losses? God hasn’t punished me, and what can people do to me?’ No one can do anything to you, but with this faith in God, you will ultimately fail to gain the truth and life. This will be a huge loss for you—you will not be able to attain salvation. Is there any greater regret? This is what ultimately comes from pursuing your own interests. If people only pursue fame, gain, and status—if they only pursue their own interests—then they will never gain the truth and life, and ultimately, they will be the ones who suffer a loss. God saves those who pursue the truth. If you do not accept the truth, and if you are incapable of reflecting upon and knowing your own corrupt disposition, then you will not truly repent, and you will have no life entry. Accepting the truth and knowing yourself is the path to growth in life and to attaining salvation, it is the chance for you to come before God to accept His scrutiny, judgment, and chastisement, and to gain the truth and life. If you give up on pursuing the truth for the sake of pursuing fame, gain, and status and your own interests, this is tantamount to giving up on the opportunity to accept God’s judgment and chastisement, and to attain salvation. You are choosing fame, gain, and status and your own interests, but what you are giving up is the truth, and what you are losing is the life, and the chance to be saved. Which means more? If you choose your own interests and give up on the truth, is this not foolish? To put it in vernacular terms, this is suffering a great loss for the sake of a small advantage. Fame, gain, status, money, and interests are all temporary, they are all ephemeral, whereas the truth and life are eternal and immutable. If people resolve the corrupt dispositions that

cause them to pursue fame, gain, and status, then they have hope of attaining salvation” (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. Knowing One’s Disposition Is the Foundation of Changing It). I saw from God’s words that if I always clung to my own interests and totally neglected practicing the truth, I’d be the one suffering a loss, not other people. I would lose my chance to gain the truth, making me incredibly foolish. Before, I lived by satanic philosophies. I believed that “Once a student knows everything the master knows, the master will lose his livelihood,” thinking that by teaching the others what I knew, I’d lose out. If they were good learners, and ended up accomplishing more than me, then I wouldn’t have any special status among people. Only then did I see that’s a satanic fallacy and a deceitful approach to things. Living that way could only make me increasingly selfish, deceitful, and devoid of humanity. I’d end up revealed and eliminated by God. I had to set my own interests aside and teach the others what I knew. Only that was in line with God’s intention and would be fulfilling my responsibilities. That was the way to feel at peace in my heart. Also, when the brothers and sisters had new ideas that built upon what I had taught them, it could raise my own skills a notch. That wasn’t a loss at all. I didn’t want to keep living so selfishly, and whenever I had a good approach or skill, I’d be happy to tell everyone.

One day, a sister asked me how to improve work efficiency. It occurred to me that if I shared our team’s methods with her and her team did better, we’d look worse. Then what would people think of me? Just then, I remembered these words of God: **“You should be able to fulfill your responsibilities, perform your obligations and duty, and set aside your selfish desires, intents, and motives; you should show consideration for God’s intentions, and put the interests of God’s house, the work of the church, and the duty that you are supposed to perform first. After**

experiencing this for a while, you will feel that this is a good way to comport yourself. It is living straightforwardly and honestly, and not being a base, vile person; it is living justly and honorably rather than being despicable, base, and a good-for-nothing. You will feel that this is how a person should act and the image that they should live out. Gradually, your desire to satisfy your own interests will lessen” (The Word,

Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. Freedom and Liberation Can Be Gained Only by Casting Off One’s Corrupt Disposition). That sister came to ask how to improve her efficiency because she was thinking of the church’s work. I had to stop thinking of my own reputation and status, consider the church’s interests, let go of my selfish desires and motives, and help the others. So, I told the sister everything I knew. I felt a sense of peace when I did that. To my surprise, she gave me some good learning materials too, which helped me improve my skills. I was so moved I didn’t know what to say. I just thanked God over and over in my heart. Learning bit by bit how to let go of my personal interests allowed me to taste the sweetness of practicing the truth. After that, I sent all the learning materials and useful skills and techniques I’d collected to the others as a reference.

This experience showed me how deeply corrupted by Satan I was. My personal interests were paramount in everything, and I didn’t think of the church’s work. I revealed a disposition just like an antichrist’s, but God didn’t treat me according to my transgressions. He set up situation after situation to cleanse and transform me. This was God’s love. I also experienced God’s righteous disposition. When I lived within my corrupt disposition, vying for name and gain and not protecting the church’s work, God hid His face from me, and I ran up against a wall in all I did. When I practiced God’s words, corrected my motives, upheld the church’s work, and shared the knowledge I possessed with everyone, everyone else started

exchanging skills and techniques, and our team's video work improved. I've truly experienced that peace that comes from acting according to God's words. Sometimes I still consider my own interests in the face of problems, but I know to lean on God and rebel against myself. Thank God for His salvation!

84. Can Hard Work Bring Entry to the Kingdom of Heaven?

By Sheila, Kenya

I was born into a Catholic family. From a young age, my grandmother taught me how to pray and how to observe Catholic rituals. By the time I was fifteen, I began to study Catholic doctrine. Our priest always said we should follow God's commandments, love each other, attend Mass, and do good deeds. He said that only people who did these things were devout believers and when the Lord comes He would take them up to the kingdom of heaven. I often told myself, "I must do as God says, follow all the church rules and actively do good deeds, so that the Lord will love me and when He returns He'll bless me and take me up to the kingdom of heaven."

After going to college, I suspended my studies so I could have more time to offer my service at church. During this time, I found that other churchgoers looked so pious when in church, praying and attending Mass, but in their lives, they smoked, drank, and went to wild parties. I was disgusted, thinking, "The Lord teaches us to love Him, to help those in need, and to shun worldly temptations. These people might look like they believe in the Lord but they don't really do anything for Him at all. They lust after worldly things and seek worldly pleasures. Doesn't that go against the Lord's teachings? I can't be like them. I'll do more good works for the Lord so I can get into the kingdom of heaven when the time comes." But over time, I found I couldn't keep God's commandments in my day-to-day life either. Whenever I saw those pleasure-seeking church members living happily and freely while I faced hardships and adversity, I couldn't help but blame God. The Lord teaches us to love others as ourselves but I was always envying and looking down on people. My family scolded me when I

did something wrong but I'd just make excuses, quibble, and get angry at them. The Lord teaches us to be humble and forgiving but I didn't adhere to this. I felt really guilty, like I was a believer in name only. I began to ponder, "Why can't I ever overcome my sins? Even though I'd confess to my priest every time I sinned and do good deeds to make up for it, I'd still end up committing that same sin. How could God bless a faith like mine?" But our priest always told us that by confessing to him after we'd sinned, we'd be forgiven, and as long as we worked for the Lord and did good deeds then He would have mercy on us again, bless us, and let us into His kingdom, because it says in the Bible: "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. As to the rest, there is laid up for me a crown of justice" (2 Timothy 4:7-8). Thinking of what the priest said comforted me. I thought that as long as I attended Mass more, went to confession, and kept expending myself for the Lord then I had hope of getting into the kingdom of heaven. So, I kept myself busy with good deeds. I'd visit sick people and prisoners, and I volunteered at an orphanage.

One day in 2017, I went on Facebook to scroll through messages just like always when I suddenly saw a passage a sister named Betty had posted: **"Though many people believe in God, few understand what faith in God means, and what they must do to be in line with God's intentions. ... 'Belief in God' means believing that there is a God; this is the simplest concept as regards believing in God. What's more, believing that there is a God is not the same as truly believing in God; rather, it is a kind of simple faith with strong religious overtones. True faith in God means the following: On the basis of the belief that God holds sovereignty over all things, one experiences His words and His work, purges one's corrupt disposition, satisfies the intentions of God, and**

comes to know God. Only a journey of this kind may be called ‘faith in God.’ Yet people often see belief in God as a simple and frivolous matter. People who believe in God in this way have lost what it means to believe in God, and though they may continue to believe until the very end, they shall never gain God’s approval, because they tread upon the wrong path. There are still those today who believe in God according to words and in hollow doctrine. They do not know that they lack the essence of belief in God, and they cannot receive God’s approval. Still they pray to God for blessings of safety and sufficient grace. Let us stop, quiet our hearts, and ask ourselves: Can it be that believing in God really is the easiest thing on earth? Can it be that believing in God means nothing more than receiving much grace from God? Are people who believe in God without knowing Him or who believe in God and yet oppose Him really able to satisfy the intentions of God?” (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. Preface). These words felt so fresh and new. I was immediately hooked. I’d especially never considered the questions at the end of this piece before. I thought, “This is fantastic! Whose words are these? Such a short passage totally reveals the meaning of faith in God and what we aim to get from our faith.” I contemplated these words, quieting my heart and earnestly considering my faith for the first time in my life. I thought back over my years of faith. I participated in lots of church activities and ceremonies, was active in church ministry and did good deeds in the community, and I suffered a little and paid some price. But I did those things so that my family and I could be blessed and protected by God, and especially so that I could get into the kingdom of heaven. I always thought I was right to pursue such things, that God would be pleased with my faith, and that I’d receive His promises and blessings. But after reading those words, I became dimly aware of a much

deeper meaning to faith. Actively doing good deeds and denying myself only to get blessings from the kingdom of heaven in return wasn't truly loving God. How could God commend that kind of faith? But then I thought about how I'd believed in the Lord for over 20 years, always engaged in church ministry. Could all my suffering and sacrifices have been for nothing? The more I pondered those words, the more I wanted to see what else was on Sister Betty's Facebook timeline so I could get this all straight in my head. And so, I got in touch with her and we had a gathering online.

I told her how I'd felt when I read those words, "What you posted online was fantastic. It showed me that I believe in the Lord just for blessings, that that's not truly loving the Lord. But there's one thing I don't get. The Bible says: 'I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. As to the rest, there is laid up for me a crown of justice' (2 Timothy 4:7-8). My priest always says that as long as we keep doing good works and good deeds then the Lord will bless us and we'll be able to get into the kingdom of heaven. I've done this throughout all the years of my faith. Will the Lord really not remember the things I've done? Will I not be able to get into the kingdom of heaven?" Betty shared this fellowship, "Always toiling, making sacrifices, and doing good deeds for the Lord will please the Lord, and when He returns He will rapture us up into His kingdom. This is what Paul said. The Lord Jesus never said anything like that, and neither did the Holy Spirit. These words just represent Paul's own views, and they're not what the Lord intended. The words of man are not the truth. Only God's words are the truth. When it comes to the important matter of getting into the kingdom of heaven, God's words must be our basis. If we go by the words of man, we'll be likely to stray from the Lord's way. So who exactly is able to get into the kingdom of heaven? The Lord

Jesus tells us clearly: **‘Not every one that said to Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven: but he that follows the will of My Father who is in heaven, he shall enter into the kingdom of heaven’** (Matthew 7:21). This shows us that God doesn’t look at how much we sacrifice when determining whether we can get into the kingdom of heaven. Instead, He looks at whether or not we follow His will. That is, to enter the kingdom of heaven, people have to rid themselves of their sinful nature and be cleansed, and they have to follow God’s words, and submit to, love, and worship God. If we toil and work lots and make many sacrifices, but we can’t follow God’s words, and often sin and resist God, then we can’t get into the kingdom of heaven. Those Jewish Pharisees who resisted the Lord served God year in, year out in the temple and spread God’s gospel far and wide. They suffered greatly and paid a high price. From the outside, they looked loyal to God but all that concerned them was holding religious rituals. They kept and preached human traditions and doctrines, and discarded God’s laws and commandments. Their service totally went against God’s intention and they strayed from the way of God. Especially when the Lord Jesus came to do His work, the Pharisees wildly condemned and slandered Him and did all they could to stop people from following Him, in order to protect their own positions and livelihoods. In the end, they colluded with the Roman government to crucify the Lord Jesus, incurring God’s punishment. This proves that people could work hard and make sacrifices and expend themselves, but it doesn’t mean they follow God’s will. This is because they haven’t been cleansed of sin, and people will still sin and resist God even if they have made sacrifices and expended themselves a lot for Him. Then there’s us. Though we appear to work hard, to be kind and giving, and we help our fellow churchgoers, our aim is to be blessed and to get into the kingdom of heaven. When God blesses us, we

thank and praise Him. When we get sick or disaster befalls us, we blame and misunderstand Him, and could even betray Him. This shows us that we don't do all these things out of love for God or to satisfy God, but to make deals with God. We're just using God to satisfy our own ambitions and desires. How then are we people who follow the heavenly Father's will? The Bible says: **'You shall be holy, for I am holy'** (1 Peter 1:16). God is holy, so how could God ever lead such filthy people as us into the kingdom of heaven? Only by casting off our sinful nature, being cleansed, and no longer sinning or resisting God can we be approved of by God and be fit to enter the kingdom of heaven." As I listened to her, I thought, "I used to think I could get into the kingdom of heaven with good works, but now it seems I've been practicing my faith at odds with God's intention. People can only enter the kingdom of heaven by becoming holy, but I don't know how to become holy." I shared my thoughts with Sister Betty.

She read me some relevant passages of Almighty God's words: **"A sinner such as you, who has just been redeemed, and has not been changed, or been perfected by God, can you be in line with God's intentions? For you, you who are still of your old self, it is true that you were saved by Jesus, and that you are not counted as a sinner because of the salvation of God, but this does not prove that you are not sinful, and are not impure. How can you be saintly if you have not been changed? Within, you are beset by impurity, selfish and mean, yet you still wish to descend with Jesus—you should be so lucky! You have missed a step in your belief in God: You have merely been redeemed, but you have not been changed. For you to be in line with God's intentions, God must personally do the work of changing and cleansing you; if you are only redeemed, you will be incapable of attaining sanctity. In this way you will be unqualified to share in the good**

blessings of God, for you have missed out a step in God's work of managing man, which is the key step of changing and perfecting. You, a sinner who has just been redeemed, are therefore incapable of directly inheriting God's inheritance" (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. Concerning Appellations and Identity). **"Though Jesus came among man and did much work, He only completed the work of redeeming all mankind and served as man's sin offering; He did not rid man of all his corrupt disposition. Fully saving man from the influence of Satan not only required Jesus to become the sin offering and bear the sins of man, but it also required God to do even greater work to rid man completely of his satanically corrupted disposition. And so, after man was forgiven of his sins, God returned to the flesh to lead man into the new age, and began the work of chastisement and judgment. This work has brought man into a higher realm. All those who submit under His dominion shall enjoy higher truth and receive greater blessings. They shall truly live in the light, and they shall gain the truth, the way, and the life"** (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. Preface). Sister Betty then said, "In the Age of Grace, the Lord Jesus just did the work of redemption. After we accept His salvation, we just need to confess and repent to Him and our sins are forgiven, and then we can enjoy the grace and blessings He bestows on us. The Lord Jesus forgave our sins, but He doesn't absolve our sinful nature and satanic dispositions. After Satan corrupted us, we became dominated by our corrupt dispositions, like arrogance, conceitedness, crookedness, deceitfulness, wickedness and greed, so we can't help but sin and resist God. It's our satanic nature that is the root of our sin and resistance against God; if we don't resolve our sinful nature, we'll never stop sinning and resisting God and we'll never be fit to enter the kingdom of heaven. That's why the Lord said He'd return in the last days, expressing

the truth to do the work of judgment beginning in God's house to utterly cleanse and change our satanic dispositions. We can then be free of sin and be fully saved and gained by God. It's just as the Lord prophesied: **'He that despises Me, and receives not My words, has one that judges him; the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day'** (John 12:48). **'I have yet many things to say to you: but you cannot bear them now. But when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will teach you all truth. For He shall not speak of Himself; but what things soever He shall hear, He shall speak; and the things that are to come, He shall show you'** (John 16:12–13). Only by accepting the returned Lord's judgment work in the last days can we be cleansed of our corruption. Only then will we be fit to inherit God's promises and enter His kingdom." Sister Betty's fellowship really made me see the light. All those years, I'd sinned and then confessed to the priest and worked hard to do good deeds, but I still couldn't stop myself from sinning. Now I knew that the Lord Jesus only did the work of redemption and by believing in Him we only had our sins forgiven, but our sinful nature still remained within us. That's why I was still living in a vicious cycle of sinning and confessing. The only way to be cleansed of our corruption is to accept the returned Lord's judgment work in the last days. Only then will we be able to truly submit to and fear God and be fit to enter God's kingdom. That thought made me so happy. I now had hope to get into the kingdom of heaven!

The next day, Sister Betty played a reading called **"The Savior Has Already Returned Upon a 'White Cloud'."** It was really touching for me and I felt those words were so authoritative. She told me excitedly, "The Lord we've been yearning for has already returned as Almighty God incarnate. Almighty God expresses many truths and does the work of judgment beginning in God's house. What we read yesterday and the

reading we listened to today were all uttered by Almighty God. He has come and opened the seven seals and unrolled the small scroll. He has disclosed all the mysteries we've never understood and bestowed all the truths we need to be fully saved and cleansed. This fulfills the prophecy in Revelation: **'He that has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches'** (Revelation 3:6). Hearing God's voice today is by the guidance of God, and we're so blessed!" I was overjoyed and thrilled to hear the news that the Lord had returned. The reading I'd listened to and the words I'd read the day before were all God's words. No wonder they possessed such authority! Who else could disclose the mystery of how the Lord returns? No one other than God could do this. I was totally convinced that these words were uttered by God and that the Lord had returned! I was so excited just then. I'd never imagined I'd be able to welcome the Lord's return. I felt so blessed! I just had one question: "How does God do the work of judgment to cleanse and fully save man?"

Sister Betty then read me this passage of Almighty God's words in answer to my question: **"Christ of the last days uses a variety of truths to teach man, to expose the substance of man, and to dissect the words and deeds of man. These words comprise various truths, such as man's duty, how man should submit to God, how man should be loyal to God, how man ought to live out normal humanity, as well as the wisdom and the disposition of God, and so on. These words are all directed at the substance of man and his corrupt disposition. In particular, the words that expose how man spurns God are spoken in regard to how man is an embodiment of Satan, and an enemy force against God. In undertaking His work of judgment, God does not simply make clear the nature of man with a few words; He exposes and prunes over the long term. All these different methods of exposure and pruning cannot**

be substituted with ordinary words, but with the truth of which man is utterly bereft. Only methods such as these can be called judgment; only through judgment of this kind can man be subdued and thoroughly convinced about God, and moreover gain true knowledge of God. What the work of judgment brings about is man's understanding of the true face of God and the truth about his own rebelliousness. The work of judgment allows man to gain much understanding of the intentions of God, of the purpose of God's work, and of the mysteries that are incomprehensible to him. It also allows man to recognize and know his corrupt essence and the roots of his corruption, as well as to discover the ugliness of man. These effects are all brought about by the work of judgment, for the essence of this work is actually the work of opening up the truth, the way, and the life of God to all those who have faith in Him. This work is the work of judgment done by God" (The Word, Vol. 1. The

Appearance and Work of God. Christ Does the Work of Judgment With the Truth). After reading this, Sister Betty said, "In the last days, Almighty God works to judge and cleanse mankind with His words. He judges man's rebellion and unrighteousness, man's God-resisting satanic nature and corrupt dispositions, and exposes our desire for blessings and our tainted faith and our fallacious views and various notions about God. He also shows us how to be honest and how to serve in line with His intentions, how to truly submit to Him and love Him, how to follow His will, and so on. By experiencing the judgment and chastisement of His words, we see how we've been corrupted by Satan—being arrogant, conceited, crooked, deceitful, wicked and greedy—and how everything we live out comes from our satanic dispositions. In this we see God's holy, righteous disposition that brooks no offense, and we begin to hate ourselves, feel regret, and focus on practicing the truth. Then our life dispositions gradually begin to

change. All this is achieved by God's words of judgment." Sister Betty then shared her own experiences. In her faith before, she always thought that she loved the Lord because she expended herself and made sacrifices enthusiastically, so she often prayed, asking the Lord for grace and blessings. She firmly believed that because she'd suffered for the Lord, He would surely reward her with entry into the kingdom of heaven. After she'd accepted God's last days' work and was judged and exposed by His words, she saw her views on faith were wrong and tainted: She didn't believe out of love for or submission to God or to do a created being's duty, but to satisfy her own desire for blessings and to get the blessings of the kingdom of heaven in return. This was using God and making deals with Him. She realized that she was so selfish, without humanity or reason, and she fully regretted it and hated herself. She began to pursue the truth as God required and her wrong views on faith were made right. Her satanic disposition also began to change. She saw that the only way to truly know herself and be cleansed of her corruption was to accept the judgment and chastisement of God's words. From her fellowship I saw how practical it is for God to express the truth and do His judgment work in the last days and how it really can change and cleanse people. I saw how much we need God to do His judgment work in the last days and that we now have a path to be freed from corruption. I was thrilled.

In later gatherings, Sister Betty fellowshipped with me on the mystery of God's incarnation, how Satan corrupts man, how God saves man one step at a time, the inside story of the Bible, what outcomes and destinations await mankind, and more. These were truths that I'd never heard before in over 20 years of believing in God. The more I read Almighty God's words, the more I felt them to be God's voice. Only God incarnate could express such authoritative and powerful words. Besides God, who could expose the

truth of mankind's corruption by Satan? Who could show us the deviations in our faith and show us the right path in our belief? Who could disclose the mysteries of God's 6,000-year plan and tell us what outcomes and destinations await us? I became convinced that Almighty God is the Lord returned—He is Christ of the last days! I then happily accepted Almighty God's work of the last days.

85. What I Gained From Writing My Testimony

By Joanne, South Korea

Recently, I noticed that lots of brothers and sisters were writing experiential articles to bear witness to God. I figured that since I'd been a believer for many years, enjoyed the sustenance of God's words, and had some experiences, I could use some of my devotional time to write an article. But, every time I wrote an opening, I didn't know what to say next. I'd been through a number of dismissals, failures, and falls, and had been pruned a lot, so I certainly had things to talk about. Why, then, did my mind go blank as soon as I started to write? Two months went by this way, and in the end I never managed to write an article—the whole process seemed too difficult. So, I started to indulge myself, thinking, "The leader knows that I lack caliber and lack ideas. I shouldn't be too hard on myself. There are lots of things I have to deal with every day, and I can't settle myself to ponder God's words. Besides, there are brothers and sisters with good caliber and lots of experiences who can write articles. Let them do it—if I don't write anything, then it'll be no great loss." So, I gave up on the idea of writing an article altogether. Sometimes, some of the other brothers and sisters would message me, reminding me that I could write an article when I had some spare time. But I would just get annoyed by this, to the point where I didn't even want to respond to their messages. Little by little, I began to stop doing devotionals regularly. I would read God's words, but I didn't have the Holy Spirit's enlightenment, and I couldn't feel God. Lots of problems came up in my work, one after another, and I was unable to understand and resolve them. I felt under a lot of pressure, and I was really in pain. I prayed to God, asking Him to enlighten me and guide me to an understanding of my issues.

One day, in the course of my devotionals, I read this passage of God's words: **"Pursuing the truth is voluntary. If you love the truth, then the Holy Spirit will work in you. When you love the truth, when you pray to and depend on God, reflect on yourself and try to know yourself no matter what persecution or tribulation befalls you, and when you actively seek the truth to resolve problems that you discover in yourself and are able to perform your duty adequately, you will be capable of standing firm in your testimony. When people love the truth, all of these manifestations come naturally to them. They occur voluntarily, gladly, and without coercion, without any extra conditions attached. If people can follow God in this way, they will ultimately gain the truth and the life, they will enter into the truth reality, and they will live out the image of man. ... If you have not gained the truth, then none of the justifications or excuses you make will hold water. Try to reason as you like, tie yourself in knots as you please—will God care? Will God converse with you? Will He debate and confer with you? Will He consult you? What is the answer? No. He absolutely will not. No matter how strong your reasoning is, it won't stand up. You must not misunderstand God's intentions, and think that if you offer all sorts of reasons and excuses then you do not need to pursue the truth. God wants you to be able to seek the truth in all environments and in every matter that befalls you, and finally achieve entry into the truth reality and gain the truth. Regardless of what circumstances God has arranged for you, what people and events you encounter, and what environment you find yourself in, you should pray to God and seek the truth in order to face them. These are precisely the lessons you should learn in pursuing the truth. If you always look for excuses to get out of, to evade, to refuse, or to resist these circumstances, then God will give**

up on you. There is no point in reasoning, or being intractable or difficult—if God does not concern Himself with you, you will lose your chance at salvation. For God, there is no problem that cannot be solved; He has made arrangements for each and every person, and has a way of handling them. God will not discuss with you whether your reasons and excuses are justified. God will not listen to whether the arguments you make in your defense are rational. He will only ask you, ‘Are God’s words the truth? Do you have a corrupt disposition? Ought you pursue the truth?’ You just need to be clear about one fact: God is the truth, you are a corrupt human, so you should take it upon yourself to seek the truth. No problem or difficulty, no reason or excuse will stand—if you do not accept the truth, you shall perish” (The Word, Vol. 6. On the Pursuit of the Truth I. What It Means to Pursue the Truth (1)). God’s words awakened me immediately. Pursuing the truth is a personal, voluntary matter. I shouldn’t have been searching for every excuse not to write an article or pursue the truth. God wants us to listen to His words and submit to His requirements in every situation and every matter. That’s what I should have been doing. God also says: “**The duty of your faith in Me is to bear witness to Me, to be loyal to Me and none other, and to be submissive to the end**” (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. What Do You Know of Faith?). Exalting God and bearing witness to Him is what He requires of us. It’s our duty. No matter how deep my understanding of the truth was, I had to write out what I’d gained from my faith in order to bear witness to God. But I hadn’t actively sought the truth or put effort into pondering God’s words. Instead, I’d found all sorts of excuses to avoid and resist writing an article. I kept saying that I lacked caliber, that I didn’t have time because I was too busy with work. I thought that it was normal to not write an article. When the others told me I should write one, I’d get annoyed and make excuses. I

didn't even want to respond to their messages. But, now calmly thinking about it, even though I had to keep up with all aspects of my work as a leader, some issues didn't need to be addressed so urgently. Many of the tasks could be done in my free time. Some of the routine tasks didn't take that much time to get done. I wasn't so busy that I didn't have any time to write an article. My busyness was just an excuse I'd found. I felt that those routine tasks could be done smoothly and easily, and that they didn't require too much mental effort. However, writing wasn't my strong suit, so I wanted to avoid it. I even used the excuse that the leader knew I was lacking caliber and ideas to avoid writing. I was really spouting absurd arguments. In fact, writing experiential testimony articles can spur us to put effort into pursuing the truth. By thinking over God's words and seeking the truth, we can resolve our corrupt dispositions, achieve a principled approach to taking care of things, and perform our duties better. Writing articles to bear witness to God is our responsibility and our duty, and there are no excuses not to do so. God says: **"God is the truth, you are a corrupt human, so you should take it upon yourself to seek the truth. No problem or difficulty, no reason or excuse will stand—if you do not accept the truth, you shall perish"** (The Word, Vol. 6. On the Pursuit of the Truth I. What It Means to Pursue the Truth (1)). From God's words, I realized that being stuck with all these reasons and excuses while not seeking or accepting the truth would utterly destroy me. What a terrifying state to be in! So, I rushed to say a prayer, "God! I understand, now, that I am not someone who accepts the truth. I've read so many of Your words and listened to so many sermons and fellowships, but I possess none of the truth reality, and I am unwilling to practice writing a testimony article. I'm so ashamed. Now that I've seen my shortcomings and deficiencies, I want to change this incorrect state and strive to meet Your demands."

Later, I prayed to God, seeking the real reason why I wasn't pursuing the truth, why I didn't want to write an article to bear witness to God. As I reflected on this, I read God's words. Almighty God says: **"In their faith in God, many people focus solely on working for God, they are satisfied with merely suffering and paying a price, but they do not pursue the truth at all. As a result, they lack true knowledge of God's work after believing in Him for ten years, twenty years, thirty years, and they cannot speak about any experience or knowledge of the truth or God's words. During gatherings, when they try to talk a little about their experiential testimony, they have nothing to say; whether they will be saved or not is a complete unknown to them. What is the problem here? This is how people who do not pursue the truth are. No matter how many years they have been believers, they are incapable of understanding the truth, much less practicing it. How could someone who does not accept the truth at all enter into the truth reality? There are some who cannot see through to this problem. They believe that if people who parrot the words and doctrines practice the truth, they can enter into the truth reality too. Is this correct? People who parrot the words and doctrines are inherently incapable of understanding the truth—so how could they practice it? What they practice appears to not violate the truth, and to be good deeds and good behaviors, but how could those good deeds and good behaviors be called the truth reality? People who do not understand the truth do not know what the truth reality is; they consider people's good deeds and good behaviors to be the practice of the truth. This is absurd, is it not? How is this any different from the thoughts and views of religious people? And how can such problems of distorted comprehension be resolved? People must first understand the intentions of God from His words, they should**

know what understanding the truth is, and what practicing the truth is, in order to be able to look at others and discern them for what they really are, and to be able to tell whether or not they possess the truth reality. God's work and salvation of man is meant to make people understand and practice the truth; only then will people be able to shed their corrupt dispositions, act according to the principles, and enter into the truth reality. If you do not pursue the truth, and are merely satisfied with expending, suffering, and paying a price for God as per your own notions and imaginings, will everything you do represent your practice of the truth and submission to God? Will it prove that you have changed your life disposition? Will it represent that you possess true knowledge of God? No. And so what will everything you do represent? It can only represent your own personal preferences, comprehension, and wishful thinking. It will purely be things that you like to do, that you are willing to do; everything you do merely satisfies your own desires, resolves, and ideals. Clearly, that is not pursuing the truth. None of your actions or behaviors have anything to do with the truth, or with God's requirements. All of your actions and behaviors are for yourself; you are only working, fighting, and running about for the sake of your own ideals, reputation, and status—this makes you no different from Paul, who toiled and worked all his life solely in order to be rewarded, crowned, and to enter the kingdom of heaven—this shows that you are clearly walking the path of Paul” (The Word, Vol. 6. On the Pursuit of the Truth I. What It Means to Pursue the Truth (2)). Reading God's words of judgment and exposure, I wanted the ground to swallow me up. I'd been a believer all these years, and had read so many of God's words. I'd had some failures and some falls, and I'd been pruned, too. But I hadn't written any testimony articles at all. I couldn't express my experiential understanding of the truth

or of God's words because I hadn't been pursuing the truth. I'd been content to just look like I could suffer and pay a price outwardly, and to do the work I was responsible for well without any mistakes or oversights. In fact, some of the routine work I'd been doing wasn't very urgent, but I'd been afraid that the others would say I didn't do real work or resolve real issues. What would I do if the leader found out and dismissed me? At that thought, I'd given up on writing an article and pondering God's words. Sometimes I got up early and wanted to do some morning devotionals, but when I turned on my computer and saw all sorts of messages that needed a response, I'd give up on devotionals and start responding to those messages, trying to handle all those problems right away. But in reality, not everything needed to be taken care of immediately. If I'd responded later on, when I could afford to put aside some time, nothing would've been delayed. But I had busied myself with routine work and given up this time, which should have been spent eating, drinking and pondering God's words. I'd thought I was being responsible and taking on a burden in my duty, and that I could do real work. But, in fact, I wanted to use my superficial suffering and efforts to gain respect and admiration. How was that doing my duty? I wanted to use my duty to protect my reputation and status, and to fulfill my personal ambitions. I clearly knew that the process of writing an article was also the process of seeking the truth, but I didn't pursue the truth and I didn't want to learn how to write an article to bear witness to God. I kept myself busy with various things every day, and even when I could make time, I found all kinds of excuses not to write. Doing my duty without pursuing the truth—wasn't this just laboring? I thought of God's words: **“None of your actions or behaviors have anything to do with the truth, or with God's requirements. All of your actions and behaviors are for yourself; you are only working, fighting, and running about for the sake of your own**

ideals, reputation, and status—this makes you no different from Paul.”

Upon reflection, I realized that I was taking the path of Paul. I was only concerned with doing the routine work, the work that I liked, the work that came easily to me. As for the essential work of the church required by God, not only did I not seek the truth, but I became averse to it and avoided it altogether. As a result, though I had believed in God for many years, I did not yet understand the truth. There was some key work that I simply couldn't get involved with—I could only do these routine tasks. I was only working to satisfy my desire for status. Not only was it causing me to lose out in life, but I was on the path of being an enemy to God. If that went on, then it wouldn't matter how much work I did—I'd end up being eliminated by God. Realizing this scared me, and I wanted to change this state right away.

I read some of God's words in my devotionals one day: **“The most obvious state of people who are averse to the truth is that they are not interested in the truth and positive things, they are even repulsed by them and loathe them, and they especially like to follow trends. They do not accept in their hearts the things that God loves and what God requires people to do. Instead, they are dismissive and indifferent toward them, and some people even often despise the standards and principles that God requires of man. They are repulsed by positive things, and they always feel resistant, opposed, and full of contempt toward them in their hearts. This is the primary manifestation of being averse to the truth. In church life, reading God's word, praying, fellowshiping on the truth, performing duties, and resolving problems with the truth are all positive things. They are pleasing to God, but some people are repulsed by these positive things, don't care for them, and are indifferent to them. ... Isn't this disposition being averse to the**

truth? Isn't this the revelation of a corrupt disposition? There are many people who believe in God who like to do work for Him and run around enthusiastically for Him, and when it comes to putting their gifts and strengths to use, indulging their preferences and showing off, they have boundless energy. But if you ask them to practice the truth and act according to the truth principles, it takes the wind from their sails, and they lose their enthusiasm. If they are not allowed to show off, they grow listless and despondent. Why is it that they have energy for showing off? And why is it that they have no energy for practicing the truth? What is the problem here? People all like to distinguish themselves; they all covet empty glory. Everyone has inexhaustible energy when it comes to believing in God for the sake of gaining blessings and rewards, so why do they grow listless, why are they despondent when it comes to practicing the truth and rebelling against the flesh? Why does this happen? It proves that people's hearts are adulterated. They believe in God entirely for the sake of gaining blessings—to put it plainly, they do so in order to enter the kingdom of heaven. Without blessings or benefits to pursue, people grow listless and despondent, and have no enthusiasm. This is all caused by a corrupt disposition that is averse to the truth” (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. Part Three). Reading God's words, I understood that I'd been avoiding writing an article and refusing to put effort into pursuing the truth entirely because of my satanic disposition of being averse to the truth. I knew well that God requires us to write articles to bear witness to Him, and if not something profound, I could write something simpler. As long as it's practical, with experiential understanding, and it's edifying, that's fine. God treasures people's testimonies, and a good testimony on life experience most comforts His heart. So, God hopes that we'll write our experiences

and gains as testimony articles to bear witness to Him. But instead of putting effort into what God requires, I found reasons to dodge and decline it. Wasn't this revealing a satanic disposition of being averse to the truth? I read another passage of God's words: **"What kind of people, do you think, are those who are averse to the truth? Are they those who resist and oppose God? They might not openly resist God, but their nature essence is to deny and resist God, which is tantamount to openly telling God, 'I do not like hearing what you say, I do not accept it, and because I do not accept that your words are the truth, I do not believe in you. I believe in whoever is profitable and beneficial to me.'** Is this the attitude of nonbelievers? If this is your attitude toward the truth, are you not being openly hostile to God? And if you are openly hostile to God, will God save you? He won't. Such is the reason for God's wrath toward all who deny and resist God. ... When a person is averse to the truth, this is undoubtedly fatal to their attaining salvation. This is not something that can or cannot be forgiven, it is not a form of behavior, or something that is fleetingly revealed in them. It is the nature essence of a person, and God is most sickened by such people. If you occasionally reveal the corruption of being averse to the truth, you must examine, based on God's words, whether these revelations are due to your antipathy toward the truth or from a lack of understanding of the truth. This requires seeking, and it requires God's enlightenment and help. If your nature essence is such that you are averse to the truth, and you never accept the truth, and are particularly repulsed by it and hostile to it, then there is trouble. You are assuredly an evil person, and **God will not save you"** (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. To Fulfill One's Duty Well, Understanding the Truth Is Most Crucial). God's words pierced me right in the heart. Being averse to the truth is openly resisting God, openly

being hostile to Him. I'd been verbally praying in the name of Almighty God, eating and drinking the truths He's expressed, fellowshiping on His words in every gathering, and preaching them to the brothers and sisters. But the way I was acting, the way I was living, wasn't in line with God's words. I wasn't practicing according to His requirements. Instead, I was disgusted with the truth. How was I being someone who accepts and practices the truth? The only way to be saved as a believer is to accept the truth. But I didn't love the truths that God has expressed. Deep in my heart, I was against God. Just my satanic disposition of being averse to the truth could ruin me. Realizing this, I felt deep regret, and I came before God in prayer, "Oh God! I haven't focused on writing an article or on trying to pursue the truth. I truly have a nature that is averse to the truth, which disgusts You. I want to repent and do my best to pursue the truth."

I read more of God's words after that: **"If you really do love the truth in your heart, and it's just that you are of somewhat low caliber and lacking in insight, a bit foolish, and you often make mistakes, but you do not intend to do evil, and have simply done a few foolish things; if you are willing at heart to hear God's fellowship on the truth, and you long at heart for the truth; if the attitude you take in your treatment of the truth and God's words is one of sincerity and longing, and you can treasure and cherish God's words—this is enough. God likes such people. Even though you may be a bit foolish at times, God still likes you. God loves your heart, which longs for the truth, and He loves your sincere attitude toward the truth. So, God has mercy on you and is always granting grace to you. He does not consider your poor caliber or your foolishness, nor does He consider your transgressions. Because your attitude toward the truth is sincere and eager, and your heart is true, then—considering the trueness of your heart and this attitude of**

yours—He shall be ever merciful toward you, and the Holy Spirit shall work on you, and you shall have hope of salvation” (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. To Fulfill One’s Duty Well, Understanding the Truth Is Most Crucial). God’s words gave me a path of practice. My heart brightened, and I felt a great sense of release. God feels no hatred for people’s poor caliber or their foolishness. As long as they thirst for the truth and treat the truth with an attitude of sincerity, they will have God’s mercy. I noticed that there were other brothers and sisters with average caliber who thirsted for God’s words, and intently pondered and sought the truth to resolve problems when issues arose. They ended up able to write really touching articles about their experiences to bear witness to God. There were others, too, who had joined the faith not long ago yet didn’t run away no matter what difficulties they faced in their duty. Instead, they submitted to God’s sovereignty and arrangements, and leaned on God to seek the truth and overcome hardship. Ultimately they bore touching testimonies. There were also new believers who focused on seeking the truth and reading God’s words to reflect on themselves when they revealed corruptions. The understanding they shared in fellowship was really genuine and practical. God doesn’t care how long someone has had faith, if they’re foolish or with poor caliber; He only cares about whether they pursue the truth, love the truth, thirst for the truth, and whether or not they approach His words with a sincere heart. Poor caliber isn’t fatal. What’s key is whether we have a heart that loves the truth, whether we can accept and practice the truth. God is faithful and righteous, and He doesn’t care whether someone’s caliber is good or poor. As long as we thirst for and strive for the truth, and we practice what we know, we can gain the Holy Spirit’s enlightenment and illumination, and our comprehension capability and ability to view things will improve. I shouldn’t be constrained by having poor caliber or find reasons and excuses

to avoid writing an article. I wanted to genuinely eat, drink, and experience God's words, to put my experiences into an article to bear witness to God.

I read a passage of God's words later that clarified His intention. Almighty God says: **"No path to achieving salvation is more real or practical than accepting and pursuing the truth. If you cannot gain the truth, your belief in God is empty. Those who speak empty words and doctrines, who always parrot slogans, say high-sounding things, follow regulations, and never focus on practicing the truth gain nothing, no matter how many years they believe. Who are the people who gain something? Those who perform their duty sincerely and are willing to practice the truth, who treat what God has entrusted to them as their mission, who gladly spend their whole lives expending for God and do not scheme for their own sakes, whose feet are firmly on the ground and who obey God's orchestrations. They are able to grasp the truth principles while performing their duty and try hard to do everything properly, allowing them to achieve the effect of testimony to God, and satisfy God's intentions. When they encounter difficulties while performing their duty, they pray to God and try to fathom God's intentions, they are able to obey the orchestrations and arrangements that come from God, and in all they do, they seek and practice the truth. They do not parrot slogans or say high-sounding things, but focus only on doing things with their feet firmly on the ground, and on meticulously following principles. They put their heart in everything they do, and learn to appreciate everything with their whole heart, and in many matters, they are able to practice the truth, after which they acquire knowledge and understanding, and they are able to learn lessons and truly gain something. And when they have incorrect thoughts or mistaken states, they pray to God and seek the truth to**

resolve them; no matter what truths they understand, they have an appreciation of them in their hearts, and are able to speak of their experiential testimony. Such people ultimately gain the truth. Those who are careless and shallow never think about how to practice the truth. They only focus on exerting effort and doing things, and on exhibiting themselves and showing off, but they never seek how to practice the truth, which makes it difficult for them to obtain the truth. Think about it, what kind of people can enter into the truth realities? (Those with their feet on the ground, who are pragmatic and put their heart into things.) People with their feet on the ground, who put their heart into things, and have a heart: such people pay more attention to reality and to the usage of the truth principles when they act. Also, in all things they pay attention to practicalities, they are pragmatic, and they like positive things, the truth, and practical things. It is people like this who ultimately understand and gain the truth” (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. In Believing in God, What Is Most Important Is to Practice and Experience His Words). I learned from God’s words that those who pursue the truth focus on putting effort into His words, pondering and practicing them regularly. They can seek the truth and learn lessons from the people, events, and things around them, and reap rewards from their experiences. Writing an article is a good way to prompt us to come before God, ponder His words, and seek the truth. Once I understood God’s intention I felt a burden, and I felt motivated to write an article. I knew that I should do this duty well to comfort God’s heart, and that through it I could further seek the truth and achieve progress in life.

After that, I started planning out every day’s work, and determining what time I’d use for which issue, according to its urgency. Whenever I had time I’d eat and drink God’s words and work on an article. When I first

started, my writing was quite superficial when it came to an understanding and knowledge of God's words. I wanted to give up and stop writing at that point, and I didn't want to ponder God's words anymore. So I prayed to God, "God! I don't want to give up. I want to put thought into Your words, and to write as much as I know. I don't want to live by my corrupt disposition. I want to use the enlightenment and illumination You provide to write in testimony to You." I felt a lot calmer after that prayer. When I settled down and thought about my own state and God's words, I would make a note of any light I had. Like this, whenever I had time, I would ponder a passage of God's words and write out my understanding. When I was done, and I saw some parts weren't too clear, I did my best to edit them. The more I wrote, the more clarity I had, and the better I saw my own state. My understanding of the truth also became increasingly practical. I felt really fulfilled with this kind of practice.

86. Who Really Tore My Family Apart?

By Fang Xia, China

I was a teacher, and my husband was an engineer. We had a great relationship throughout our entire marriage, and our daughter was smart and well-behaved. Our friends and colleagues all envied us. Then in December 2006, I accepted Almighty God's work of the last days. Reading God's words, I learned that our Savior, Almighty God, has expressed lots of truths to purify and save mankind. Having faith, reading God's words, gaining the truth, and casting off sin and our corrupt dispositions is the only way to be protected by God through the great disasters and survive, and ultimately enter His kingdom. I also learned that for each of us, our life has come from God, and God has given us everything we own. As created beings, we ought to do our duty. Later I started to spread the gospel and water newcomers. Every day felt so fulfilling. My husband noticed that since becoming a believer, I always had a smile on my face, and he said to me happily, "Before, you were always totally wiped out after a day of work and I worried about you. After coming to believe in God, you're just as busy every day, but your mental state is getting better and better. Apparently believing in God is great!" But good things didn't last. Before long, he started persecuting me and standing in the way of my faith.

One day in March 2007, he came home from work and said sternly the moment he walked in, "Today, our boss called a general meeting for cadres from every department and said that in recent years, there have been more and more believers in Almighty God, putting the Party into a panic. They've listed The Church of Almighty God as a major national target, and all believers in Almighty God are subject to Communist Party arrest. It's worse for public employees: Anyone who's found to be a believer or have a

family member in the Church will be fired, without exception! Since no one at your school has found out about your faith yet, give it up before it's too late. You'll be arrested if your boss finds out!" I was thinking, "Believing in God is the right path and doesn't break any laws, so what right does the CCP have to stop me?" So I said to him, "When China joined the WTO, didn't it declare that there's freedom of belief in China? Why the persecution now? What's wrong with my faith?" He got really angry and responded, "I know believing in God is good, but the Party doesn't allow it, so what can we do? You can't fight city hall. If you keep your faith you could face arrest and prison at any time. If you were arrested, wouldn't that ruin our family? You have to give up your faith, for the sake of this family!" Hearing that from him made me indignant. I never imagined that in their efforts to keep people from believing in God, the Party would use people's bosses to pressure them, but it did explain my husband's abrupt change of heart. I wondered, "Will the Party let me off the hook if they ever find out about my faith? Why is it so hard to be a believer in China?" Then I remembered a passage of God's words a sister read for me once: **"The great red dragon persecutes God and is the enemy of God, and so, in this land, those who believe in God are thus subjected to humiliation and oppression, and these words are fulfilled in you, this group of people, as a result. Because it is embarked upon in a land that opposes God, all of God's work faces tremendous obstacles, and accomplishing many of His words takes time; thus, people are refined as a result of God's words, which is also part of suffering. It is tremendously difficult for God to carry out His work in the land of the great red dragon—but it is through this difficulty that God does one stage of His work, making manifest His wisdom and His wondrous deeds, and using this opportunity to make this group of people complete"** (The Word, Vol. 1. The

Appearance and Work of God. Is the Work of God As Simple As Man Imagines?). I remember she also fellowshiped, “The Communist Party is an atheistic party. It hates God and resists Him the most. As believers in a country ruled by the Communist Party, we’re bound to be oppressed and humiliated. The Lord Jesus once said: **‘Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness’ sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven’** (Matthew 5:10). God uses environments of persecution to perfect people’s faith. Being able to stand firm in our witness through such an oppressive, painful environment is what God approves of!” This gave me faith. I knew I couldn’t give up because of the Party’s oppression. No matter how my husband stood in my way, I was determined to believe.

For a while, they were having meetings nearly every day at his work, stressing there couldn’t be any believers among employees or their family members. My husband came home and lectured me on ideology nearly every day. One evening when I got home from a gathering, he looked grave and said, “You went to another gathering? How many times have I told you that you can’t go to gatherings—why won’t you listen? It’s not like you don’t know that the Party forbids religion. Our boss has told us over and over again that the Party won’t let any believers in Almighty God off easily! Isn’t keeping your faith at a critical time like this just looking for trouble?” I said, “Having faith doesn’t break any laws. What right does the Party have to not allow that?” His response was, “The Party doesn’t care if you break any laws or not. Believers in Almighty God are considered political criminals. If you’re arrested by the Party for your faith, not only will it ruin your reputation, but your life will be in danger, and your family will also be implicated.” After my husband finished speaking, I told him, “You know very well that the Party resists God, but you’re still on their side, standing in my way. Aren’t you afraid of punishment?” He said

disparagingly, “Punishment isn’t important—it’s important to understand which way the wind is blowing. The Communist Party is in power now, so if you want to survive under their rule, don’t you have to do what they say? If you don’t listen to them, can you have a livelihood? I get money from the Party, so I have to speak and act on their behalf. You’re also working and collecting a salary under the Party, so would they let you off if you follow God instead of the Party? You have to be aware of what’s at stake! Are you going along with the Party, or with Almighty God? You have to choose today!” I was really conflicted at the time. If I decided to keep my faith, my boss could find out at any time. Then I’d lose my position and probably be arrested by the police. I’d had my job for over a decade. I’d worked hard up until then and had been promoted to a first-class teacher. I’d gained the students’ admiration, their parents’ respect, my colleagues’ envy, and my boss’ recognition and approval. Wherever I went, relatives and friends treated me with great enthusiasm. If I lost my job, I’d face rejection from my family, the mockery of my neighbors, and the disdain of my colleagues. I was afraid my reputation would be ruined if that happened. Then I thought, “Almighty God’s work of judgment in the last days is the last stage of His work to save mankind. The only way to cast off our corrupt disposition is to undergo God’s judgment and purification; then we can survive the disasters under God’s protection and be taken to a beautiful destination. Missing that chance will be a lifelong regret.” I thought of something God says: **“If you are of high station, of honorable reputation, possessed of abundant knowledge, the owner of plentiful assets, and supported by many people, yet these things do not prevent you from coming before God to accept His calling and His commission and to do what God asks of you, then all that you do shall be the most meaningful cause on earth and the most just undertaking of mankind. If you reject**

the call of God for the sake of status and your own goals, all that you do shall be cursed and even despised by God” (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. Appendix 2: God Presides Over the Fate of All Mankind). Thinking of God’s words brightened my heart. Believing in God, pursuing the truth, and doing the duty of a created being is the only thing with value and meaning. But faced with a choice between faith and work, I was constrained by name and status, afraid that the Communist Party would take away my job because of my faith, which would ruin my reputation. What mattered to me was still my career and my name. But what could those things do for me? They’d just bring temporary gratification for my vanity; they’d never help me gain the truth or cast off my corrupt dispositions. And what meaning is there in getting others’ envy and admiration? Also, I knew that the Communist Party is an enemy to God. If I gave up my faith, and lived an ignoble existence under the Party’s rule in order to hold on to my job and enjoy a good status and reputation, wouldn’t that be betraying God? I couldn’t be that kind of person. And so, I told my husband very calmly, “I’ll never give up my faith.” He glared at me and said sternly, “If you keep your faith, I’ll report you to the police and have you arrested.” He started making a call as he said that. I was totally stunned at the time. He knew that the Communist Party oppresses believers, but was still going to hand me over to them. Wasn’t that just throwing me to the wolves? To serve his own interests, he disregarded our love as husband and wife, and wanted to report me to the police to force me to give up my faith. I couldn’t give in to him. Then he asked me over and over again, “Made up your mind?” I said, “Even if I’m arrested and do time, I’m keeping my faith!” My husband’s face went ashen and he threw the phone on the ground in anger.

Despite my husband’s persecution, I still persisted in balancing my job and doing my duty. One night, his expression changed immediately when

he saw me reading God's words, and he said, "How many times have I told you? In China, you simply can't take a path of faith! From the central government down to local authorities, from management down to individual employees, things are monitored and carried out at all levels. The Party will not let you off if you keep on believing in God!" Hearing my husband say that all the time, and also thinking of the constant danger of being arrested as a believer in the Party's country was scary for me. I worried if I could withstand the torture if I were arrested someday. What if they beat me to the point of death or disability? If I couldn't take the suffering and became a Judas, betraying God, wouldn't that be the end of my life? I knew I wasn't in the right state, so I quickly said a prayer to God in my heart, asking for faith so that I wouldn't lose testimony through that oppression and hardship. I read this in God's words: **"When people are ready to sacrifice their lives, everything becomes trifling, and no one can get the better of them. What could be more important than life? Thus, Satan becomes incapable of doing any more in people, there is nothing it can do with man"** (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. Interpretations of the Mysteries of "God's Words to the Entire Universe," Chapter 36). God's words are so well put. When we are ready to put our lives on the line and aren't constrained by death, Satan's hands are tied. I was afraid of being beaten to death by the police mainly because I lacked faith. I valued my own life too much. Everything is under God's command, including our life and death. I should give myself over to God and submit to His orchestrations and arrangements. Even if I was beaten to death, that would be persecution for the sake of righteousness, which has value. With the faith and strength I got from God's words, I read some of them for my husband: **"We trust that no country or power can stand in the way of what God wishes to achieve. Those who obstruct God's work, resist the word of**

God and disturb and impair the plan of God shall ultimately be punished by God. He who defies the work of God shall be sent to hell; any country that defies the work of God shall be destroyed; any nation that rises up to oppose the work of God shall be wiped from this earth and shall cease to exist” (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. Appendix 2:

God Presides Over the Fate of All Mankind). I gave my husband testimony on God’s righteous disposition that tolerates no offense. I said, “The Communist Party arresting and persecuting believers is doing evil and resisting God, and will be punished by God in the end. By standing with the Party and keeping me from my faith, you are doing evil along with them.” After hearing that, he said helplessly, “You think I want this? The Communist Party is making this happen. If I don’t keep you from believing in God, I could lose my living, too. Why can’t you think of me? If you’re arrested and imprisoned for being a believer, even if they don’t kill you, you will suffer heavy injuries. How could I just watch you suffer? What can I do to get you to give up your faith?” I said, “Almighty God is the one true God, and I will never give up my faith!” Shockingly, when he saw I wouldn’t give in, he got physical with me. In a rage, he said to me, “If you’re arrested for your faith, that’s a dead end! You just insist on putting yourself in their hands. Let’s see if you can still believe after you’re dead.” After that he pinned me down on the bed like a madman, clutched my neck hard and said, “I’ll strangle you, then see how you can believe!” I was being strangled so hard that I couldn’t breathe, and I was fighting as hard as I could, but it was no use. Eventually, I passed out. As I was gradually coming to, I thought of how my husband, who had never hit or yelled at me over years of marriage, had become so vicious toward me to keep his status and his job, nearly choking me to death. I was devastated. At the same time, I hated the Communist Party even more. If they didn’t use family members’

jobs and futures in their threats, my husband never would have been so merciless.

Later on, every time my husband's unit applied more pressure through meetings, he ramped up his persecution of me. One day when he came home from a meeting, he gave me another ideological lecture, and said that under the CCP's rule in China, the entire family suffers if one person is a believer, so I couldn't keep my faith, or both of us would lose our jobs, and our daughter's studies and career would be impacted. He asked how our daughter could ever hold her head up if I were arrested and imprisoned for my faith, and said even if I didn't think of the two of us, I should think of her. I was thinking that if the Communist Party took away my husband's job and ruined my daughter's future because of my faith, wouldn't they both hate me forever? I was really distressed at the time, so I silently called out to God, asking Him to give me faith and strength. I remembered this from God's words: **"Of everything that occurs in the universe, there is nothing in which I do not have the final say. Is there anything that is not in My hands? Whatever I say is done, and who among human beings can change My mind? ... Is it not I who have personally made these arrangements?"** (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. God's Words to the Entire Universe, Chapter 1). All things and all events are in God's hands. Whether my husband and I lost our jobs, whether my daughter's studies were impacted, and whether she'd get a job, was all orchestrated and arranged by God. Only God can determine all of this—not the Communist Party. At this thought, I said to my husband, "People's fates are all in God's hands, under His sovereignty and arrangements. You think that if you listen to the Communist Party your job is guaranteed? The Party doesn't even have a handle on its own fate, so how can it control others' fates?" Then angrily, he retorted, "If you're dead set on being a believer, the Party will

not let you off easily. They send the believers they find to their deaths. Rather than that, you'd be better off dying at my hands!" Before I could react, he ran into the kitchen like he'd lost his mind, grabbed a knife, stood in front of me, then said sternly, holding the knife up, "Are you going to be a believer, or live a proper life? If you insist on being a believer, I'll slit your throat!" Both angry and afraid, I called out to God urgently in my heart. Just then, our daughter suddenly burst out of her room, put herself in front of me and yelled, "Dad! If you're going to kill Mom, you'll have to kill me first!" He was startled by what she did, and with his eyes fixed on her, the muscles in his face froze in place. He slowly put down the hand holding the knife. At the time, I felt an unexplainable sense of loss and pain in my heart as tears of grief and indignation flowed. I'd never imagined my husband would threaten my life because I believed in God. This was not the man I'd married. This was clearly a demon!

I read this in God's words in my devotionals one day: **"Why does a husband love his wife? Why does a wife love her husband? Why are children dutiful to their parents? Why do parents dote on their children? What sorts of intentions do people actually harbor? Is their intent not to satisfy their own plans and selfish desires? Do they truly mean to act for the sake of God's management plan? Are they really acting for the sake of God's work? Is their intent to fulfill the duties of a created being?"** (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. God and Man Will Enter Into Rest Together). **"Anyone who does not recognize God is an enemy; that is, anyone who does not recognize God incarnate—whether or not they are inside or outside this stream—is an antichrist! Who is Satan, who are demons, and who are God's enemies if not resisters who do not believe in God? Are they not those people who are rebellious against God?"** (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. God and Man Will Enter Into Rest

Together). As I was pondering over God's words, scene after scene of my husband oppressing me played through my mind like a movie. Why was my husband, who had never yelled at me or hit me, doing everything he could to persecute me ever since I became a believer? Why would all those years of marriage just crumble in the face of personal interests? There's no true love between human beings—everyone's just using each other. My husband was good to me before because I could go to work, earn money, and bear and raise his children. In his eyes, I was useful. But now that I'd chosen faith, which affected his interests, he didn't care about the feelings between us. To keep me from believing in God, he tried to report me to the police, he choked me until I passed out, and even threatened to kill me with a knife. He insisted he didn't want me to believe in God because he was thinking of me, and was afraid I'd be arrested, but it was actually all for himself. He put his own career and reputation above all else. To protect his own living, he was willing to be the Communist Party's running dog, its lackey, forcing me onto a dead-end path. He even used all sorts of vile, malicious tactics to stop me from believing in God. In essence, he was a demon who hated and resisted God. Then I read another passage of God's words: **"As someone who is normal, and who pursues the love of God, entry into the kingdom to become one of the people of God is your true future, and a life that is of the utmost value and significance; no one is more blessed than you. Why do I say this? Because those who do not believe in God live for the flesh, and they live for Satan, but today you live for God, and live to follow the will of God. That is why I say your lives are of the utmost significance. Only this group of people, who have been selected by God, are able to live out a life of the utmost significance: No one else on earth is able to live out a life of such value and meaning"** (The Word, Vol.

1. The Appearance and Work of God. Know God's Newest Work and Follow His Footsteps).

God's words were really inspiring for me and helped me see the meaning of life. Believing in God, pursuing the truth, and fulfilling the duty of a created being is the only way to live a life with meaning and value. I'd been working myself to the bone out in the world, and even though I'd made a bit of a name for myself, I felt empty and miserable inside. I'd become ill from exhaustion, and my perfectly good voice had become so hoarse that I could barely talk. At that point I really felt that no matter how many certificates of honor I had or how much people envied and admired me, it would never resolve my illness or emptiness. The reputation I'd pursued and had all those years couldn't help me gain the truth or save me from Satan's corruption and harm. On top of that, during my years of teaching I'd been inculcating students with all sorts of fallacies that deny God. I'd been singing the Communist Party's praises the whole time. If that continued, there was no way I'd have a good outcome. I had to stop serving the Party. I prayed to God in my heart, asking Him to give me a way out so I could let go of my job and focus on doing my duty. Later, when I went for a health checkup, the doctor told me, "Your throat is in terrible shape. The whole thing has changed color, and it's really engorged with blood. It's swollen and is so enlarged, it's already seriously impacting your vocal cords. If you don't stop using your throat, you'll probably lose your ability to speak altogether in the future." Then he suggested a six-month medical leave of absence for me. I gave God heartfelt thanks. I thought I'd have more time to read God's words and do my duty, but unexpectedly, my husband started using even more vile tactics to stand in my way.

One day in February 2009, he asked two of my classmates and my younger brother to come over to my house. They forced me into a car and took me to a mental hospital. But there was nothing wrong with me, so the hospital wouldn't take me. My husband said, "You know clearly that if the

Party arrests you believers, they will send you to your deaths, but you insist on being a believer. Only someone with a mental problem isn't afraid of death. They're limited in the tests they can do at this hospital. The provincial mental hospital has better facilities and more competent doctors. I'll take you there for a checkup to see if you're mentally ill!" I responded angrily, "I think you're the one with the mental problem! It's not that I'm not afraid to die. I choose to believe even if it means death, because I know Almighty God is the coming of the Savior. He has expressed so many truths and can save man from sin and disasters. People who don't believe in God or who don't accept God's judgment and purification will all die in the great disasters..." But he wouldn't listen. Early the next morning he forcefully took me to the provincial mental hospital. We went up to the second floor and I saw a crazy lady curled up in a ball on the floor of the hallway with her body locked up with a really heavy iron chain. A middle-aged man was holding on to one end of the chain, pulling on it really hard, dragging the woman along the floor. She had both arms stretched out in fear, holding onto the chain, struggling with all her might and yelling loudly. Seeing her hair looking like a tangled mess, her scary expressions, and hearing her heart-rending shrieks, was a bloodcurdling experience. In that instant, I was overcome with a sense of pain and being wronged. I felt that this was a tremendous insult to my dignity and I wanted to immediately turn around, rush downstairs, and get out of that cursed place, but I couldn't, because my husband was following me every step of the way closely. Then I remembered something from God's words: **"Many are the sleepless nights that God has endured for the sake of the work of mankind. From up high to the lowest depths, He has descended to the living hell in which man lives to pass His days with man, He has never complained of the shabbiness among man, and He has never reproached man for his**

rebelliousness, but endures the greatest humiliation as He personally carries out His work. How could God belong to hell? How could He spend His life in hell? But for the sake of all mankind, so that the whole of mankind can find rest sooner, He has endured humiliation and suffered injustice to come to earth, and personally entered into ‘hell’ and ‘Hades,’ into the tiger’s den, to save man. How is man qualified to oppose God? What reason does he have to complain about God? How can he have the gall to look upon God?” (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. Work and Entry (9)). To save mankind, God has become incarnated in the last days and come to atheist-ruled China, appearing and working in this most evil, most God-resisting place, suffering the oppression and condemnation of the Communist Party and religious world, and enduring great humiliation, but God endures it all without a word. He’s the Creator, so supreme and honorable, but He’s come to live among corrupt human beings, bearing enormous humiliation, expressing truths among man and quietly doing the work of saving humanity. But I, a corrupt human, seeing that I was being compared on equal terms with the mentally ill, felt like my dignity and integrity were wounded and that it was humiliating for me, and so I wanted to escape. I was so ashamed at that thought and I said a silent prayer to God, swearing that no matter what I had to face next, or what sort of humiliation I suffered, I’d never give in to Satan. Later, the doctor just randomly gave me a couple of bags of medication and sent me home. When my husband saw that he really couldn’t keep me from my faith, he just didn’t care about me anymore, and I took on a duty again.

In October 2012, when a Judas ratted me out, the police found out I might be a church leader and started having plainclothes officers tail me. I had to leave home and go to another region to do my duty so I wouldn’t be arrested. I later found out that the day after I left home, the police went to

my house to arrest me. They also arrested three other brothers and sisters to ask them about my whereabouts, and started a manhunt for me using my photo. Two months later, the National Security Brigade searched my house and confiscated a couple of books of God's words, and told my husband they'd get me even if I'd run to the ends of the earth. The Bureau of Education also went to my house practically every day, forcing my husband to look for me. I was then near the top of the Communist Party's most wanted list.

Later on, they even used my child to draw me back home. One afternoon in late December 2012, I got an unexpected call from my daughter, "Mom, I've been afraid to call you. The police are looking everywhere for you, and they've searched our house. I'm calling you now to tell you that leaders from the Bureau of Education and your school asked Dad and me to tell you that they want you to give up your faith and come back home soon, and they promise they won't hold you accountable. They also said that as long as you come home, even if you don't ever go to work, they'll still pay you your full salary...." I was indignant when I heard that. The Communist Party was using status and money to tempt me into giving up my faith. How despicable! What made me really sad was that my daughter seemed to deeply trust what the government and school leaders said. From that I saw clearly that my husband and daughter were both being misled and used by the Communist Party. I said to my daughter resolutely, "Honey, you're looking at this too naively. Do you know what would happen if I came home? I'd be like a lamb thrown to the wolves. I won't go home." She responded anxiously, "They said if you don't come home, they'll revoke all 20-plus years of your pension. Mom, come back. If you don't, they'll make Dad divorce you and have me sever ties with you. If you don't come home, then you won't be my mom anymore." I was stunned at

the time. The Communist Party was not only taking away my pension insurance, but even coercing my husband to divorce me and my daughter to sever ties with me. It was so evil and despicable! I hated the Party with all my heart. I thought of God's words: **"Religious freedom? The legitimate rights and interests of citizens? They are all tricks for covering up sin! Who has embraced the work of God? Who has laid down their life or shed blood for the work of God? Humans, who have been enslaved for generations, in an unbroken line from parents to children, have unceremoniously enslaved God—how could this not incite fury? Thousands of years of hate are concentrated in the heart, millennia of sinfulness are inscribed upon the heart—how could this not inspire loathing? Avenge God, completely snuff out His enemy, do not allow it to run rampant any longer, and do not permit it to rule as a tyrant! Now is the time: Man has long since gathered all his strength, he has devoted all his efforts and paid every price for this, to tear off the hideous face of this devil and allow people, who have been blinded, and who have endured every manner of suffering and hardship, to rise up from their pain and rebel against this evil old devil. Why put up such an impenetrable obstacle to the work of God? Why employ various tricks to deceive God's folk? Where is the true freedom and the legitimate rights and interests? Where is the fairness? Where is the comfort? Where is the warmth? Why use deceitful schemes to trick God's people? Why use force to suppress the coming of God?"** (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. Work and Entry (8)). The Communist Party publicly proclaims freedom of religion, but secretly uses all sorts of vile tactics to oppress believers. This clearly exposes its demonic essence of hating the truth and resisting God. The Party was trying both the carrot and the stick to keep me from having faith, first using a generous salary as bait,

trying to use money to tempt me back home so they could arrest me. When I didn't fall for it, they were going to take away my job and salary, cutting off all my income, and even coming after me to arrest me, and leaving me with no home to return to. This clearly showed me that the Party looks moral and just on the outside, but its essence is brutal and evil. It's a perverse gang of demons that opposes Heaven and goes against God at every turn. I came to hate it and reject it from the heart, and swore I'd break from it even if it cost me my life! After that, my husband was forced to divorce me and my daughter also severed ties with me.

Before when I was working inside the Party system, I couldn't discern its evil essence and even praised it all the time. After experiencing its persecution, I finally saw its demonic essence of hating the truth and resisting God, and came to fully hate and rebel against it, swearing to never follow it again! I also saw God's love. It was God's words that gave me faith and strength, allowing me to stand strong through persecution and hardship over and over again. I'm so grateful to God. No matter how hard the path ahead of me is, I will follow Almighty God to the end unwaveringly!

87. What I Gained From Being Pruned

By Miriam, Japan

In June 2022, I was elected to be a church leader. Thinking about all the work I would take on, the wide variety of experience I'd gain, and how it would be good for my growth in life, I was thrilled. I was also grateful to God for this chance to practice. But I was new to leadership, so I didn't know a lot of principles. Additionally, I didn't seek principles when problems cropped up, but just plodded away blindly doing whatever I thought best. As a result, it wasn't long before issues arose in my work. A supervisor I'd selected was being always perfunctory in her duty and holding up work. When an upper leader found out about it, she reprimanded me, "In something as important as appointing staff, why ignore principles and decide things on your own without discussing them with your co-workers? How arrogant and self-righteous!" I felt terrible when I heard her say that. I admitted that I'd been arrogant and self-righteous, but at the same time I felt really worried. Now that my problem had been exposed, the leader and other brothers and sisters would see how I really measured up. If the same old problem kept cropping up, would the leader dismiss me? To my surprise, before long, another task I worked on had to be redone because I'd done it my own way, which delayed the work, and I was pruned again. I was told, "As a leader, you're not handling personal matters, but doing work that involves the entire church. Leaders should seek principles and hold discussions with co-workers in all matters. Why do you always just do whatever you want? You're way too arrogant and self-righteous!" Hearing this from her was like a knife through the heart, and I couldn't stop the tears from flowing. She was right—she had already pointed out this very problem. Why did I make the same mistake? If I was always doing things

my own way and messing up in my duty, I was bound to be dismissed sooner or later. During that time, I noticed some others around me who didn't seek truth principles in their duties, but did things their own way, which led to disruptions in the work and got them pruned, and some were even dismissed. Seeing this made me even more anxious and afraid. I felt like I had to really watch out from then on and never make a mistake. Otherwise, I'd be the next one dismissed. If I really got dismissed, would I still have a good outcome and destination? I became really cautious in work after that. Even in ordinary work discussions, when we needed to express an opinion, I was hesitant to open my mouth, afraid I'd say the wrong thing and expose my problem. When offering suggestions on issues I noticed in following up on the work, I second-guessed myself, thinking, "Is this really a problem? If I'm wrong, will the leader prune me? Never mind—better not to bring it up. That way at least I won't be wrong, and won't be pruned." At that thought, I'd just shrug off things I wasn't sure about. But that left me feeling kind of guilty, and I realized I was being irresponsible toward my work. I figured I should ask my co-workers and then handle matters after seeing what they thought. That way the leader wouldn't say I was arrogant and self-righteous and acting willfully. Once, the church needed to select a gospel deacon. One brother was good at sharing the gospel, but others said he didn't have good humanity, and that he had attacked and taken revenge on others. I couldn't tell if he was a viable candidate, so I discussed it with my co-workers. Everyone said to give it a try. I felt kind of uneasy at the time and wanted to further discuss it, but then I figured, I was the only one who felt that brother wasn't well-suited. What if I made a suggestion that was off, and the leader said that not only did I not understand the principles, I was also arrogant and self-righteous, and pruned me? So I didn't bring up my concerns, and I even comforted myself: I'd already asked for everyone's

input, so if something went wrong, I wouldn't be solely responsible. Before long, the upper leader looked into our work and found out this brother didn't have good humanity. He wouldn't take others' suggestions, and would even attack and take revenge on them. The leader said, "If he's not dismissed right away, the work will be impacted." I was really upset to hear her say that, because I'd been aware of the problem before, but I was afraid my take on it was off, and I'd be pruned if there was a problem, so I hadn't said anything. Luckily the leader noticed it and had him dismissed, otherwise the work definitely would have suffered. I felt really guilty. I had a distinct sense that there was a problem, so why didn't I have the guts to bring it up? Why did I fail to protect church work? Why was I so afraid of being pruned? I prayed to God, asking Him to guide me to understand my problem.

Then one day, I read a passage of God's words: **"Some people follow their own will when they act. They violate the principles, and after being pruned, they admit in mere words that they are arrogant, and that they made a mistake only because they do not have the truth. But in their hearts, they complain, 'No one else sticks their neck out, just me—and in the end, when something goes wrong, they push all the responsibility onto me. Isn't this stupid of me? I can't do the same thing next time, sticking my neck out like that. The bird that sticks its neck out is the one that gets shot!' What do you think of this attitude? Is it an attitude of repentance? (No.) What attitude is it? Haven't they become slippery and deceitful? In their hearts they think, 'I'm lucky this time it didn't turn into a disaster. A fall into the pit, a gain in your wit, so to speak. I have to be more careful in the future.' They do not seek the truth, using their petty tricks and cunning schemes to attend to and handle the matter. Can they gain the truth in this way? They**

cannot, because they have not repented. The first thing to be done when repenting is to recognize what you have done wrong: to see where your mistake was, the essence of the problem, and the corrupt disposition you have revealed; you must reflect on these things and accept the truth, then practice according to the truth. Only this is an attitude of repentance. If, on the other hand, you consider cunning ways exhaustively, you become more slippery than before, your techniques are cleverer and more concealed, and you have more methods to deal with things, then the problem is not quite as simple as just being deceitful. You are using underhanded means and you have secrets you cannot divulge. This is wickedness. Not only have you not repented, but you have become more slippery and deceitful. God sees that you are overly intransigent and wicked, that you admit on the surface you were wrong, and accept being pruned, yet in reality, you do not have a repentant attitude in the slightest. Why do I say this? Because while this event was happening or in its aftermath, you did not seek the truth at all, you did not reflect and try to know yourself, and you did not practice according to the truth. Your attitude is one of using Satan's philosophies, logic, and methods to resolve the problem. In reality, you are sidestepping the problem, and wrapping it up in a neat package so others see no trace of it, letting nothing slip. In the end, you feel you are quite smart. These are the things God sees, rather than your having truly reflected, confessed, and repented of your sin in the face of the matter that has befallen you, then going on to seek the truth and practicing according to the truth. Your attitude is not one of seeking the truth or of practicing the truth, nor is it one of submission to God's sovereignty and arrangements, but one of using Satan's techniques and methods to resolve your problem. You give others a

false impression and resist being revealed by God, and you are defensive and confrontational regarding the circumstances that God has orchestrated for you. Your heart is more closed than before and separated from God. As such, can any good result come from it? Can you still live in the light, enjoying peace and joy? You cannot. If you shun the truth and shun God, you will certainly fall into the darkness and weep and gnash your teeth” (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the

Last Days. Only by Pursuing the Truth Can One Resolve Their Notions and Misunderstandings of God). God’s words allowed me to understand that those who love and accept the truth are able to seek the truth from being pruned, self-reflect and learn where they went wrong, what corrupt dispositions they revealed, and how they should be resolved. Afterward, they can do their duty according to principles. This is truly accepting pruning and showing genuine repentance. But when those who don’t accept the truth are pruned, they may verbally acknowledge they were wrong, but they don’t seek the truth or self-reflect to know themselves. Instead, they use slick and deceitful ways to wrap themselves up, not letting others see their issues so they can protect themselves. That kind of person isn’t just deceitful; they’re also wicked. I reflected on myself by comparing myself to what’s exposed in God’s words. When I first became a leader, I didn’t know a lot of principles and I didn’t seek them; I just did things my own way. That was disruptive to the work. The leader pointed out my problem in order to help me out. But though I admitted I’d messed up, I didn’t reflect on myself after that, or put effort into understanding principles. I just did guesswork and stayed on my guard, thinking that since the leader had already seen how I really measured up, I could be dismissed if I made another mistake, and then I wouldn’t have a good outcome and destination. I disguised myself at every turn for self-protection, not showing my issues or shortcomings. I was really cautious in

everything I said and did. I weighed the pros and cons before mentioning an issue or expressing an opinion, considering whether I might be pruned if my opinion was wrong and then led to consequences. I'd only say something if I could guarantee everything would be foolproof. But I wouldn't breathe a word about anything I was uncertain about, without any consideration for how the work could suffer if the problem was ignored. And to avoid taking responsibility, when I needed to select someone, I asked for my co-workers' input, but just did it for show. Though I was unsettled about their suggestion, I didn't further discuss about it, leading to the wrong person being selected. That was harmful to the brothers and sisters as well as the work. I saw that when I was pruned, I didn't show any repentance at all. I just became more slippery and deceitful, constantly thinking about how to avoid slipping up and being pruned, always on my guard against God and the leaders. Doing my duty that way was disgusting and odious to God. I'd never get the Holy Spirit's work and guidance that way. If I didn't repent, I knew that eventually I'd be spurned and eliminated by God.

During my devotionals once, I read a passage of God's words where He exposes how antichrists react to being pruned that helped me understand my own problem. Almighty God says: **"Some antichrists that work in the house of God silently resolve to act scrupulously, to avoid making errors, being pruned, angering the Above or being caught by their leaders doing something bad, and they make sure to have an audience when they do good deeds. Yet, no matter how scrupulous they are, due to the fact that their motives and the path they take are incorrect, and because they speak and act only for the sake of fame, gain, and status and never seek the truth, they often violate principles, disrupt and disturb the church's work, act as Satan's lackeys and even often commit many transgressions. It is very common and very typical for**

such people to often violate principles and commit transgressions. So, of course, it is very difficult for them to avoid being pruned. They have seen that some antichrists have been revealed and eliminated because they have been sternly pruned. They have seen these things with their own eyes. Why do antichrists act so cautiously? One reason, for sure, is that they are afraid of being revealed and eliminated. They think, 'I've got to be careful—after all, "Caution is the parent of safety" and "The good have peaceful lives." I must follow these principles and remind myself at every moment to avoid doing wrong or getting into trouble, and I must suppress my corruption and intentions and not let anyone see them. As long as I don't do wrong and can persevere to the very end, I will gain blessings, evade the disasters, and I will gain something in my belief in god!' They often urge themselves on, motivate and encourage themselves in this way. Deep down, they believe that if they do wrong, their chances of gaining blessings will diminish significantly. Is this not the calculation and belief that occupies the depths of their hearts? Putting aside whether this calculation or belief of antichrists is right or wrong, based on it, what will they be most worried about when being pruned? (Their prospects and destiny.) They associate being pruned with their prospects and destiny—this has to do with their wicked nature. They think to themselves: 'Am I being pruned like this because I am going to be eliminated? Is it because I'm not wanted? Will god's house stop me from doing this duty? Do I not seem trustworthy? Am I going to be replaced with someone better? If I am eliminated, can I still be blessed? Can I still enter the kingdom of heaven? It sounds like my performance hasn't been very satisfactory, so I must be more careful in the future, and learn to be obedient and well-behaved, and not make any trouble. I must learn to be patient, and

survive by keeping my head down. Every day when I do things, I must imagine that I'm walking on eggshells. I can't let my guard down. Although I have carelessly given myself away this time and been pruned, their tone didn't sound very strict. It looks like the problem is not very serious, it seems like I still have a chance—I can still escape the disasters and be blessed, so I should just humbly accept this. It's not as if I'm going to be dismissed, let alone eliminated or expelled, so I can accept being pruned in this way.' Is this an attitude of accepting being pruned? Is this truly knowing one's corrupt disposition? Is this really wanting to repent and turn over a new leaf? Is this being genuinely determined to act according to the principles? No, it is not. Then why do they act this way? Because of that glimmer of hope that they can evade the disasters and be blessed. As long as that glimmer of hope still exists, they cannot give themselves away, they cannot reveal their true selves, they cannot tell others what is in the depths of their hearts, and they cannot let others know about the resentment they harbor inside. They must hide these things, they must tuck their tails between their legs, and not allow others to see them for who they really are. Therefore, they do not change at all after being pruned, and they carry on doing things as they did before. So, what is the principle behind their actions? Simply to protect their own interests in everything. No matter what errors they make, they do not let others know; they must make everyone around them think that they are a perfect person without faults or defects, and that they never make mistakes. This is how they disguise themselves. After keeping up their disguises for a long time, they feel confident that they are more or less certain to elude the disasters, to be blessed, and to enter the kingdom of heaven” (The Word, Vol. 4. Exposing Antichrists. Item Nine (Part Eight)). I saw from

God's words that when antichrists are pruned for violating principles or doing evil, what they're most worried about is being eliminated, then not gaining any blessings. So they become incredibly cautious in what they do after that, on their guard against God and man. They think as long as they don't do anything wrong and don't expose their flaws for others to discover, they can hold on to their position and their blessings will be guaranteed. I saw that antichrists are terribly selfish, vile, deceitful, and wicked. They just believe in God for the sake of blessings. When they're pruned, all they think of is their own future and interests. They may become well-behaved and compliant for a time, but it's just an act, so they can stay in the church to avoid the disasters. I saw that my attitude toward pruning was just how antichrists act, linking pruning with receiving blessings. When I was pruned, I was guessing whether the leader would dismiss me, and worried about whether I'd have a good future and destination. I was walking on eggshells in my duty after that. I thought and rethought any suggestions or issues I wanted to bring up, very afraid of making a mistake and exposing my inadequacies. Then the leader would know how I measured up and dismiss me. I became even more defensive against God when I saw other brothers and sisters around me dismissed, afraid I'd make a mistake and be pruned again, or dismissed. I hadn't truly accepted pruning, or self-reflected and seen my errors. I was just blindly on my guard against God and used deceitful tactics to disguise myself. I thought that as long as I hid my true face and didn't make more mistakes or get pruned, I wouldn't be dismissed, and then I could stay in the church and end up with a good outcome and destination. I was always cautious with God, racking my brains to calculate my personal gains or losses. I saw issues but didn't do any seeking or report them. I just cared about watching my own back and didn't remotely consider church work. I was so selfish and deceitful. Disguising myself that

way, though I could fool the leader for a time and not get dismissed right away, if I never self-reflect, repented, or made changes, I'd be revealed and eliminated by God sooner or later. Realizing that, I said a prayer, ready to repent, and to seek the truth to resolve my problem.

In my seeking, I read some of God's words about how to properly handle being pruned. God said: **"In reality, God's house prunes people entirely because they act willfully and arbitrarily in the performance of their duties, thus disrupting and disturbing the work of God's house, and do not reflect or repent—only then does God's house prune them. In this situation, does them being pruned mean that they're being eliminated? (No, it doesn't.) Absolutely not, people should accept this in a positive manner. In this context, any pruning, whether it be by God or man, whether it comes from leaders and workers or brothers and sisters, is not malicious, and it is advantageous for the work of the church. Being able to prune a person when they have acted willfully and arbitrarily and disturbed the work of God's house, is a just and positive thing. This is something that upstanding people and those who love the truth should do"** (The Word, Vol. 4. Exposing Antichrists. Item Nine (Part Eight)). **"When it comes to being pruned, what is the very least that people should know? Being pruned must be experienced to adequately do one's duty—it is indispensable. It is something that people must face on a daily basis and often experience in order to attain salvation in their faith in God. No one can be apart from being pruned. Is pruning someone something that involves their prospects and destiny? (No.) So what is pruning someone done for? Is it done in order to condemn them? (No, it's done in order to help people understand the truth and do their duty according to principles.) That's right. That's the most correct understanding of it. Pruning someone is a kind of discipline, a kind of**

chastening, and naturally it's also a form of helping and remedying people. Being pruned allows you to alter your incorrect pursuit in time. It allows you to promptly recognize the problems you currently have, and allows you to recognize the corrupt dispositions you reveal in time. No matter what, being pruned helps you recognize your mistakes and do your duties according to principles, it saves you from causing deviations and going astray in time, and it prevents you from causing catastrophes. Is this not the greatest aid to people, their greatest remedy? Those with a conscience and reason should be able to treat being pruned correctly" (The Word, Vol. 4. Exposing Antichrists. Item Nine (Part Eight)).

I learned from His words that pruning is one way of purifying and perfecting people. It's also something that we have to face and undergo in our process of growth in life. The words of pruning might be really harsh and poignant sometimes, but it's being directed at our corrupt dispositions. It's directly exposing and dissecting our corruption and rebellion. It doesn't contain any malice toward us at all, and it's not to condemn and eliminate us—it's unrelated to our future and fate. But I distortedly believed that being pruned was being condemned, that I'd be dismissed and eliminated. Misunderstanding God that way was denying His righteousness, and blaspheming against Him! The leader pruning me was mainly for my being arrogant and self-righteous and acting willfully, disrupting the church's work, which was really infuriating. The leader wanted me to make changes as soon as possible to protect the church's work. Taking a stern tone was the most normal thing in the world, and she wasn't dismissing me. Those words of pruning got right to the crux of my problems, deviations, and corrupt dispositions and allowed me to see the seriousness of the issue. My heart was so numb and rigid, and without that, I would have totally ignored kind words of advice and kept making the same mistake. Then I'd never make

progress in my duty. I'd keep doing evil and disrupting church work. Every time I was pruned, it promptly corrected my deviations and mistakes, stopping my evil in its tracks. That's what's truly most helpful for me. Thinking carefully about when I made the most gains in the truth, it came from the times I'd stumbled and fallen, and been pruned. I really felt that pruning is God's best, most effective method for judging and cleansing us. Being able to experience pruning is God's grace, and His special favor for me. But I didn't seek the truth or self-reflect. I just kept living within misunderstandings of God, worried about my future and fate. I was so unreasonable, and didn't know what was good for me.

I read this passage of God's words during a gathering once, and it really impacted me. Almighty God says: **"If someone is always planning for their own interests and prospects when they perform their duty, and gives no thought to the work of the church or the interests of God's house, then this is not performing a duty. This is opportunism, it is doing things for their own benefit and to obtain blessings for themselves. In this way, the nature behind performing their duty changes. It is just about making a deal with God, and wanting to use the performance of their duty to achieve their own goals. This way of doing things is very likely to disrupt the work of God's house. If it only causes minor losses to the church's work, then there is still room for redemption and they may still be given an opportunity to perform their duty, rather than being cleared out; but if it causes great losses to the church's work and incurs the wrath of God and people alike, then they will be revealed and eliminated, with no further opportunity to perform their duty. Some people are dismissed and eliminated in this way. Why are they eliminated? Have you found the root cause? The root cause is that they always consider their own gains and losses, get**

carried away by their own interests, are unable to rebel against the flesh, and don't have a submissive attitude toward God at all, so they tend to behave recklessly. They believe in God only to obtain profit, grace, and blessings, and not at all to gain the truth, so their belief in God fails. This is the root of the problem. Do you think it is unjust for them to be revealed and eliminated? It is not unjust in the slightest, it is entirely determined by their nature. Anyone who does not love the truth or pursue the truth will eventually be revealed and eliminated"

(The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. Only by Seeking the Truth Principles Can One Perform One's Duty Well). God exposes that if you always consider and plan for your own interests and future in your duty, the nature of what you're doing has changed, and it's no longer doing a duty. You're bound to end up doing evil and disrupting church work, then be dismissed and eliminated. I thought about how I was new to being a leader, didn't know the principles, and mostly did whatever I pleased. Even after I was pruned, not only did I not repent, but I still kept considering my own future and fate and was afraid of being transferred. I clearly saw problems, but to protect myself, I preferred holding up work over pointing them out. This wasn't doing a duty; it was compromising church work and doing evil. Some of the people I saw dismissed and eliminated were always protecting their own interests in their duty. After problems cropped up and they were pruned, they didn't put much effort into truth principles, but just disguised themselves, becoming guarded against God and the leaders. They were constantly worried about being dismissed and eliminated, always living in this vicious cycle. Their relationship with God wasn't normal and they never got results in their duty. Some even did evil and disrupted church work, ending up revealed and eliminated. I could see from their failures that whether one has a correct motive and starting point in their faith and their

duty, and what path they choose, are critical. These directly impact their outcome and destination. My state, my behavior, and the path I was on were all the same as those people. Always afraid of making mistakes in my duty and being pruned, I was timid and guarded against God, rigidly clinging to my own interests and future, but I rarely sought truth principles to solve any problems of mine for which the leader pruned me. If that had gone on longer, not only would I have failed to make progress in my duty, but it would have harmed the work and I would have left behind a transgression. The nature and consequences of that are serious. That wouldn't be God revealing and eliminating me, but me ruining my own future. At that point, I realized what I most needed to do then wasn't to worry about whether I'd be dismissed and eliminated, but to put real reflection into issues the leader pointed out, put effort into seeking and considering truth principles, and strive to follow principles in my duty. If I didn't do well despite giving it my all and was dismissed, then I should still submit to God's arrangements.

Then I found some more of God's words to practice and enter into. God's words say: **"Your destination and your fate are very important to you—they are of grave concern. You believe, if you do not do things with great care, it will mean that you cease to have a destination, that you have destroyed your own fate. But has it ever occurred to you that people who expend effort solely for the sake of their destination are toiling in vain? Such efforts are not genuine—they are fakery and deceit. If that is the case, then those who work only for the sake of their destination are on the threshold of their final defeat, for failure in one's belief in God is caused by deceit. I have previously said that I do not like to be flattered or fawned on, or treated with enthusiasm. I like honest people to face up to My truth and My expectations. Even more, I like it when people are able to show the utmost care and consideration**

for My heart, and when they are even capable of giving up everything for My sake. Only in this way can My heart be comforted” (The Word, Vol.

1. The Appearance and Work of God. On Destination). **“People must approach their duties and God with honest hearts. If they do, they will be people who fear God. What kind of attitude do people with honest hearts have toward God? At the very least, they have a God-fearing heart, a heart of submission to God in all things, they do not ask about blessings or misfortunes, they do not speak about conditions, they leave themselves at the mercy of God’s orchestration—these are people with honest hearts”** (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. Only by Seeking the Truth

Principles Can One Perform One’s Duty Well). God says people who always consider their own future and destination in their duty and who only think of their own interests, aren’t genuine toward God, but are using and cheating Him. They disgust God; He hates them. God likes honest people who don’t care about blessings or curses, don’t have conditions, and are genuine in their duty. Only that kind of person gets God’s approval. Once I understood God’s intention, I found a path of practice. In my duty, I had to focus on trying to be an honest person, open my heart to God, and let go of personal gains or losses. When pruned, no matter what the leader’s attitude toward me is, and whether I’d get dismissed or not, I should seek principles to do my duty well—that’s the key. At the time the leader had mainly been pruning me for being arrogant and self-righteous, and doing things however I wanted. If that problem wasn’t addressed, I’d be likely to keep acting that way. So I made a summary of each of the problems that had cropped up, and compared them to principles one by one. If I wasn’t clear on something, I went to fellowship with others. When I encountered something I wasn’t sure about after that, I wasn’t quick to trust myself anymore, and didn’t do things on my own ideas. I prayed to God and quietly sought principles. I

also discussed things with co-workers until we reached a consensus. After doing that for a little while, fewer mistakes arose in my duty. When I ran into a challenge that I really couldn't resolve, I'd seek help from upper leaders. Once when I was making an inquiry, I still felt some uncertainty after an upper leader finished his fellowship. I felt like I still had some questions and I wanted to bring them up, but I was afraid if they weren't good questions, the leader might say I had poor caliber and lacked insight. Just as I was hesitating, I realized that I was worrying about my own gains and losses again. I started praying to God over and over, ready to practice the truth and be an honest person. Whether I saw the issue accurately or not, I was willing to correct my motives and gain clarity on this aspect of the truth. Eventually, I mustered up the courage to ask my questions. After hearing me out, the leader said those really were issues. He also fellowshipped, "If there's still anything that's not clear, that hasn't been fully addressed, you need to bring it up right away. That will help the church's work." Hearing the leader say that, I was really grateful to God, and felt the inner peace that comes with letting go of personal interests and being an honest person.

Through these experiences, I learned how being pruned is really good for us. Being pruned can be difficult in the moment, but now I'm able to handle it appropriately, and I can submit and seek truth principles to resolve my problems. This makes me feel much more at ease.

88. This Is God's Voice

By Pierre, USA

I was born into a Christian family and, as a child, I went to church services with my parents. I didn't know why, but as time went on, I began to feel a constant emptiness in my heart; I didn't know what to say to the Lord when I prayed and I wasn't feeling enlightened when I read the Bible. I felt very far from the Lord, and I felt a great pain. Later, I often looked for pastors' sermons to listen to and I also watched a lot of movies about how to establish faith. I also did my best to stop doing things that didn't accord with the Lord's requirements, but my heart still felt empty.

One day, my wife and I watched a Christian movie on YouTube called *Yearning* that really moved us. As the movie started, the main character was writing down his own experiences and realizations, and he said, "Two thousand years ago, the Lord Jesus promised His followers, '**Behold, I come quickly**' (Revelation 22:7)." This line from the Bible drew us in immediately. The prophecies in Revelation were all mysteries, and here the main character was talking about this section of the book's prophecies. What would he say next? We kept watching with growing curiosity. The main character in the movie is then arrested by the CCP for believing in God. While in prison, he meets Brother Zhao Zhiming, who believes in Almighty God. Zhiming finds a chance to slip him a piece of paper. On it is written: "**Do not be discouraged, do not be weak, and I will make things clear for you. The road to the kingdom is not so smooth; nothing is that simple! You want blessings to come to you easily, do you not? Today, everyone will have bitter trials to face. Without such trials, the loving heart you have for Me will not grow stronger and you will not have true love for Me. Even if these trials consist merely of minor**

circumstances, everyone must pass through them; it's just that the difficulty of the trials will vary from one person to another. ... Those who share in My bitterness will certainly share in My sweetness. That is My promise and My blessing to you" (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. Utterances of Christ in the Beginning, Chapter 41). **"During these last days you must bear testimony to God. No matter how great your suffering, you should walk until the very end, and even at your last breath, still you must be faithful to God and at the mercy of God; only this is truly loving God, and only this is the strong and resounding testimony"** (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. Only by Experiencing Painful Trials Can You Know the Loveliness of God). The main character is so moved after he reads these two passages. He is greatly comforted, and he finds his faith and strength. My wife and I were astonished by these two passages as well. How were these words so authoritative, so powerful, and so touching? It was as though God was speaking directly to us, telling us what we should do. Though I'd seen from these words how walking the path of believing in God would entail suffering hardships, I felt a sense of sweetness arise deep within me, and hearing these words gave me faith and strength. I thought, "Where on earth did these words come from? Could they have come from God? Could it be that the Lord really has returned? But when the Lord comes, He should come down on a cloud, and we haven't yet seen any sign of Him coming down on a cloud." Although at the time I felt a little confused, I really enjoyed these words, and I turned to my wife and said, "These words are amazing! I've never heard words with such power before." I then paused the movie, picked up a notebook, and copied these words down. As I wrote, I read them over again: **"Do not be discouraged, do not be weak, and I will make things clear for you. The road to the kingdom is not so smooth; nothing is that simple!"** "The road to the kingdom"? I thought,

“Only God Himself could know what the road to the kingdom is. These words are talking about the road to the kingdom, and they couldn’t have been spoken by just any ordinary person—this is a matter only God could know about!” I kept on reading: **“Today, everyone will have bitter trials to face. Without such trials, the loving heart you have for Me will not grow stronger and you will not have true love for Me. Even if these trials consist merely of minor circumstances, everyone must pass through them; it’s just that the difficulty of the trials will vary from one person to another. ... Those who share in My bitterness will certainly share in My sweetness. That is My promise and My blessing to you.”**

The tone of these words gave me a sense that they’d been spoken by someone who administered all things, who was directly confiding in us with absolute sincerity that walking the path of faith is not all smooth sailing, and that each and every person must experience differing amounts of pain and hardship, but this is to perfect our love and faith. This is God’s love for us. I suddenly saw the light. I’d always believed before that having faith in God meant that everything had to go well and smoothly in life, and that this was God’s blessing. I believed that if we met with disaster or calamity like the nonbelievers did, then that was a bad thing, and that meant God was punishing us. It was like how in 2010, I lost everything I owned in an earthquake. Back then, I felt that God had not watched over or protected me, which upset me a lot, and I lived in a state of misunderstanding God. Now, reading these words, my view on such difficult situations changed. At the same time, I also came to understand that I had to obey, pray to God, and seek to understand God’s deeds when hardship and trials came my way, and that by doing this I would not become weak and negative. I kept thinking about the words: **“Those who share in My bitterness will certainly share in My sweetness. That is My promise and My blessing**

to you.” The words “**will certainly,**” “**promise,**” and “**blessing**” revealed the Speaker’s authority and power. He asks things of us, but He also makes us promises, and moreover, He has the power to fulfill these promises. These words shook my heart, and I wondered how the tone of these words could be so similar to the tone the Lord Jesus used. Like when the Lord said: “**I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man comes to the Father, but by Me**” (John 14:6); and “**I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believes in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live**” (John 11:25); “**Truly I say to you, Except you be converted, and become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven**” (Matthew 18:3). All these words contain God’s requirements of us and promises to us, and they embody the identity and status of God. When we hear them, we are able to feel the authority and power of God’s words. When we saw that the words in this movie were just like this, my wife and I both felt as though they’d come from God, and as if they were the voice of God. At the time, I was excited, but also confused: These words weren’t from the Bible, so where on earth had they come from? We continued watching the movie. In the movie, Zhiming told the main character while they were working that the Lord Jesus had returned, and that He had become flesh and come down in secret to perform the work of judging and cleansing man in the last days. At this point, my wife and I were somewhat confused, because we’d always believed that the Lord Jesus would one day come back down on a cloud. But then in the movie Zhiming said, “We are only waiting for the Lord’s return based on the prophecies of His descent upon a cloud, but we have overlooked other prophecies about the Lord’s return. This is a grave mistake! Many parts of the Bible contain prophecies about the Lord’s return. For example, the Lord’s prophecies: ‘**Behold, I come as a thief**’ (Revelation 16:15). ‘**And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the**

bridegroom comes; go you out to meet him' (Matthew 25:6). There is also Revelation 3:20, '**Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hears My voice, and opens the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me.**' And Luke 17:24–25, '**For as the lightning, that lightens out of the one part under heaven, shines to the other part under heaven; so shall also the Son of man be in His day. But first must He suffer many things, and be rejected of this generation.**' These prophecies mention the Lord returning as a thief, and the coming of the Son of man; they mention that He speaks to people while knocking at the door, and so on. This shows that when it comes to the Lord's return, besides His public descent upon a cloud, He will also come down in a secret way. If we believe the Lord will only return by descending upon a cloud, then the prophecies of Him coming in secret could not be fulfilled. There are many prophecies in the Bible about the Lord's return in the last days. If we cast aside the other prophecies, and delimit the way the Lord will return as Him descending on a white cloud just based on one or two parts of the Bible, we are likely to miss the chance to welcome His return, and liable to be abandoned by Him." At this, my wife and I immediately took out our Bible and checked these verses word by word. As we did so, I thought, "These verses really do speak of the Lord returning in secret, so it looks as though the Lord coming down on clouds is not the only way in which He returns. This has really opened my eyes."

My wife and I carried on watching the movie. Zhiming went on with his fellowship, saying, "The Bible prophesied that '**I come as a thief**' (Revelation 16:15), and, '**At midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom comes; go you out to meet him**' (Matthew 25:6). '**But first must He suffer many things, and be rejected of this generation**' (Luke 17:25). The appearance and work of Almighty God have fulfilled these prophecies.

From the outside, He looks just like a regular person. He speaks from within normal humanity. Who could imagine that He is the appearance of the Lord? This completely fulfills the prophecy **‘I come as a thief.’** Those who preach the gospel bear witness to Almighty God’s words all those who seek God’s appearance, and they patiently fellowship on His words. This is the Lord knocking at the door! Since Almighty God’s appearance and work, He has been continually subjected to the brutal hunts and persecution of the CCP, and He has suffered the mad resistance, condemnation, and rejection of the religious world. There have even been many evil spirits and demons who have openly attacked, condemned, and blasphemed Almighty God online. This completely fulfills this prophecy spoken by the Lord: **‘But first must He suffer many things, and be rejected of this generation.’** If the Lord had descended publicly on a cloud with great glory like people imagine, then the tares, goats, evil servants, and antichrists would definitely have fallen down in worship to accept Almighty God. How would they be revealed then? Almighty God has come and expressed all the truths that purify and save mankind, and He is doing the work of judgment in the last days. His sheep listen to His voice, and wise virgins from every denomination hear the words Almighty God has expressed and know them to be the truth, and to be God’s voice, and they have all turned toward Almighty God. This is the rapture. These people have been raptured up in front of God’s throne, and accept judgment and chastisement before Christ’s seat. They are first to be purified, made into overcomers by God, and they become the first fruits. This completely fulfills this prophecy from Revelation 14:4–5, **‘These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb wherever He goes. These were redeemed from among men, being the first fruits to God and to the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no lie; they are**

without blemish.’ After God descends in secret and makes this group of overcomers, His great work will be complete. After that, He will publicly descend on a cloud and appear to all nations and all peoples. That will fulfill Revelation 1:7, **‘Behold, He comes with clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him.’** This will be the scene of God publicly descending on a cloud, and all eyes will be able to see Him. Those who resisted and condemned Almighty God will also be able to see Him descending on a cloud, which is why **‘all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him.’** God works in stages and to a plan; the prophecies of the Lord’s return have now been largely fulfilled, so all that is left is for the prophecies of God coming down openly with clouds to be fulfilled after the disasters.” Seeing that Zhiming’s fellowship was reasonable and based on facts, I knew in my heart that the Lord has indeed returned, that He has become flesh and has come among man in secret. My wife and I realized how foolish we’d been to have always clung to the idea of the Lord descending on clouds, but at the same time, we rejoiced for having been able to hear the great news of the Lord’s coming in secret. I couldn’t help but think, “It’s no wonder these words feel so authoritative and powerful, and sound as though they are God’s voice. As it turns out, they are indeed words spoken by God Himself!” Filled with excitement, we kept on watching the movie. Almighty God says: **“Many people may not care what I say, but I still want to tell every so-called saint who follows Jesus that, when you see Jesus descend from the heaven upon a white cloud with your own eyes, this will be the public appearance of the Sun of righteousness. Perhaps that will be a time of great excitement for you, yet you should know that the time when you witness Jesus descend from the heaven is also the time when you go down to hell to be**

punished. That will be the time of the end of God's management plan and it will be when God rewards the good and punishes the evil. For the judgment of God will have ended before man sees signs, when there is only the expression of truth. Those who accept the truth and do not seek signs, and thus have been purified, shall have returned before the throne of God and entered the Creator's embrace. Only those who persist in the belief that 'The Jesus who does not ride upon a white cloud is a false christ' shall be subjected to everlasting punishment, for they only believe in the Jesus who exhibits signs, but do not acknowledge the Jesus who proclaims severe judgment and releases the true way and life. And so it can only be that Jesus deals with them when He openly returns upon a white cloud. They are too stubborn, too confident in themselves, too arrogant. How could such degenerates be rewarded by Jesus? The return of Jesus is a great salvation for those who are capable of accepting the truth, but for those who are unable to accept the truth it is a sign of condemnation. You should choose your own path, and should not blaspheme against the Holy Spirit and reject the truth. You should not be an ignorant and arrogant person, but someone who submits to the guidance of the Holy Spirit and longs for and seeks the truth; only in this way will you benefit" (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. By the Time You Behold the Spiritual Body of Jesus, God Will Have Made Heaven and Earth Anew). **AS** I heard these words, I wondered whether the term **"so-called saint"** referred to those who don't accept God's work when He comes in secret, and who just wait for the Lord Jesus to come down on a cloud. All these years, almost the whole religious world has been waiting for the Lord to come down on the clouds. But these words clearly state that if we blindly cling to the idea of the Lord Jesus coming down on the clouds and refuse to accept the fact that God has already come among man in

secret, then we will end up being punished by God, as by that time God's work in the last days of judging, cleansing, and completely saving man will be over. The tone of these words is stern, they carry God's unoffendable disposition, they are filled with authority and power, and they fill us with fear and dread. At the same time, these words serve as both a reminder and an exhortation to us, in the hope that we might become people who seek and accept the truth, and not blindly delimit God's work or deny the fact that the Lord has returned. My wife and I were drawn in by this movie and watched it several times over. Almighty God's words truly shook us to our cores. Our feeling of excitement lasted for days.

One day, I called my wife on my way to work, and the more we talked about it, the more we felt that these words must be God's words. Excitedly, she said to me, "We just have to get a hold of this book!" We were so eager to find out what we should do next and how we should welcome the Lord, so when I got home from work that day, we searched online for "The Church of Almighty God" and found their official website. Once there, we saw the book **The Word Appears in the Flesh**. First, we read in the **Preface** Almighty God saying: **"'Belief in God' means believing that there is a God; this is the simplest concept as regards believing in God. What's more, believing that there is a God is not the same as truly believing in God; rather, it is a kind of simple faith with strong religious overtones. True faith in God means the following: On the basis of the belief that God holds sovereignty over all things, one experiences His words and His work, purges one's corrupt disposition, satisfies the intentions of God, and comes to know God. Only a journey of this kind may be called 'faith in God.' Yet people often see belief in God as a simple and frivolous matter. People who believe in God in this way have lost what it means to believe in God, and though they may**

continue to believe until the very end, they shall never gain God's approval, because they tread upon the wrong path" (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God). I couldn't help but think how great these words were, and I knew that they really were the truth. These words completely changed my previous conceptions about faith in God. Before, I knew only that we had to read the Bible a lot, pray a lot, and listen to sermons a lot, and we believed in God only to be blessed and graced. I had no idea that true faith in God means to experience God's words and work on the foundation of the belief that God holds sovereignty over all things. These words explained the true meaning of faith in God so profoundly and meticulously, and gave such a clear way forward. I became even more convinced that these words had come from God and that they were God's voice, as only God could speak on the truth and the true meaning of faith in God so clearly.

We kept reading, and saw that Almighty God says: **"God and man cannot be spoken of on equal terms. His essence and His work are most unfathomable and incomprehensible to man. If God does not personally do His work and speak His words in the world of man, then man would never be able to understand the intentions of God. And so, even those who have devoted their entire lives to God would not be able to receive His approval. If God does not set to work, then however well man does, it will all be for naught, because God's thoughts will always be higher than the thoughts of man, and God's wisdom is beyond man's comprehension. And so I say that those who claim to 'fully understand' God and His work are an inept lot; they are all overweening and ignorant. Man should not define the work of God; moreover, man cannot define the work of God. ... Since we believe that there is a God, and since we wish to satisfy Him and to see Him, we should seek the**

way of truth, and should look for a way to be compatible with God. We should not stand in stiff-necked opposition to Him. What good could possibly come of such actions?” (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. Preface). After reading this passage, we realized that we are all just created beings, forever insignificant. God, on the other hand, will forever be God. His words and work contain so many mysteries that we cannot fathom. We should adopt a humble and seeking attitude toward His work, we cannot arbitrarily jump to conclusions. We then read more of Almighty God’s words that said: **“You may have opened this book for the purpose of research, or with the intention of accepting; whatever your attitude, I hope that you will read it to the end, and will not put it aside easily”** (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. Preface). Reading this, I felt just how cordial these words were, as though God were speaking directly to us, leading us on to seek His words and work. I decided to keep on reading this book and to get in touch with The Church of Almighty God.

We sent a message using the chat function on The Church of Almighty God’s website, and the brothers and sisters from the Church got back to us quickly. After that, we often read Almighty God’s words with the brothers and sisters online, with each of us sharing our experiences and understanding. As I read more and more of Almighty God’s words, I came to know many truths, such as how God performs the work of judgment in the last days, the difference between being saved and attaining full salvation, what being raptured means, what kind of person can enter the kingdom of heaven, and the mystery of the incarnation. The word of Almighty God says: **“When Jesus came into the world of man, He ushered in the Age of Grace and ended the Age of Law. During the last days, God once more became flesh, and with this incarnation He ended the Age of Grace and ushered in the Age of Kingdom. All those who are**

able to accept the second incarnation of God will be led into the Age of Kingdom, and will moreover become able to personally accept the guidance of God. Though Jesus came among man and did much work, He only completed the work of redeeming all mankind and served as man's sin offering; He did not rid man of all his corrupt disposition. Fully saving man from the influence of Satan not only required Jesus to become the sin offering and bear the sins of man, but it also required God to do even greater work to rid man completely of his satanically corrupted disposition. And so, after man was forgiven of his sins, God returned to the flesh to lead man into the new age, and began the work of chastisement and judgment. This work has brought man into a higher realm. All those who submit under His dominion shall enjoy higher truth and receive greater blessings. They shall truly live in the light, and they shall gain the truth, the way, and the life" (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. Preface). "From the work of Jehovah to that of Jesus, and from the work of Jesus to that of this current stage, these three stages cover in a continuous thread the entire gamut of God's management, and they are all the work of one Spirit. Since the creation of the world, God has always been at work managing mankind. He is the Beginning and the End, He is the First and the Last, and He is the One who begins an age and the One who brings the age to an end. The three stages of work, in different ages and different locations, are unmistakably the work of one Spirit. All those who separate these three stages stand in opposition to God" (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. The Vision of God's Work (3)). After reading Almighty God's words, I came to understand that the Lord Jesus only performed the work of redeeming mankind, and not the work of judging, cleansing, and fully saving man in the last days. Although our faith in the Lord means that our sins are

absolved, our sinful nature is not expunged, and that is why we still often commit sins and are unable to break free of their fetters. Upon the foundation of the Lord Jesus' work of redemption, Almighty God expresses the truth and performs the work of judgment in the last days to cleanse and save man once and for all. Almighty God and the Lord Jesus are one God, who takes on different names in different ages. Only by experiencing Almighty God's work of judgment in the last days can our corrupt dispositions be cleansed and can we be fit to enter God's kingdom. This information is truly crucial for us to know! Almighty God's words revealed to us these mysteries concerning God's work, and we were shaken to our cores. Truly, these are the words and voice of God! Because only God can reveal the mysteries of God's work, only God can end the old age and launch a new one. No person can do this.

We also saw that Almighty God has expressed many truths related to practice, such as the principles of faith, principles of being an honest person, principles of submission to God, and principles of truly loving God. These are truly enriching, and entirely fulfilling the Lord Jesus' words: **"I have yet many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. However, when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth: for He shall not speak of Himself; but whatever He shall hear, that shall He speak: and He will show you things to come"** (John 16:12-13). We became totally convinced that Almighty God is indeed the Lord Jesus returned, that Almighty God's words are the expressions of God, and that they are the scroll prophesied in Revelation. By reading Almighty God's words, we came to understand many truths we'd never understood before, and by praying to Almighty God and reading His words, the problems we encountered in our daily lives were all resolved. We truly began to live a

life face-to-face with God, we are so blessed! I learned that it is truly important to hear God's voice when it comes to welcoming the Lord!

89. Why I Always Sought to Stand Out in My Duty

By Wu Yan, China

In late June of 2021, because the Chinese Communist Party was arresting Christians like crazy, my host home was being monitored. I moved out right away, but it was highly likely the police were watching me, too, so I had to hide at home to work. I was responsible for some groups' work at the time. My workload was increasing and some things just couldn't be done by writing letters, and it wasn't as effective as face-to-face communication. So, in accordance with the needs of the work, the leader appointed Sister Wang Zhen as my partner.

Wang Zhen didn't know the brothers and sisters very well at first, so before every gathering I'd touch base with her on the issues that needed to be addressed to help her be more effective in fellowshiping with brothers and sisters. At that time, I found out that Sister Li Fan was always being perfunctory in her duty. She hadn't changed after several fellowship sessions and it already held up the work. Based on the principles, she needed to be dismissed right away. And so, I put together a document explaining the situation about Li Fan and the principles of dismissing people for Wang Zhen to look over and shared my opinion with her on why Li Fan needed to be dismissed, so Wang Zhen could be really thorough in her fellowship with Li Fan to benefit her in reflecting and learning about herself. Wang Zhen went and dismissed her the next day. Wang Zhen told me about how it went when she came home later that day, but didn't mention me a single time among the brothers and sisters through the entire thing or say that I'd helped her gain discernment or handle the problem. I was a bit disappointed. I felt like no one else knew about what I was doing

behind the scenes. I wondered if they would think Wang Zhen had grasped Li Fan's problems right away after she took on the duty, that she had more understanding of the truth and more discernment than me. Thinking about how much I'd done that no one knew about and which made Wang Zhen look good was kind of upsetting for me.

A few days later in a work discussion with Wang Zhen, it came up that one group had been doing worse and worse. I couldn't see the root of the problem, and she mentioned to me that there might be an issue with the group leader. Considering that and thinking about that group leader's consistent behavior, I saw that she only protected her status and did tasks that would earn her face, but never did real work, and that was really holding things up. Based on the principles she needed to be dismissed. I knew I couldn't resolve the issue personally, and that I should share my understanding with Wang Zhen so that she could better fellowship with the others, help them gain discernment, and dismiss this leader right away. But when I thought back on Li Fan's dismissal, how I had been looking for principles and putting together the document, and how I had fellowshipped so much with Wang Zhen but no one even knew, I felt that if I shared all my thoughts with her this time and she dismissed that group leader, the others would definitely give her all the credit. They'd think that after just a short time on the work she'd discerned two people who weren't suitable that I hadn't dismissed after being in that position of responsibility for so long. They'd think she had better discernment and understanding of the truth. I wanted to keep some of my views to myself so Wang Zhen's fellowship wouldn't be clear, and the others wouldn't admire her. With this thought, however, I felt kind of guilty. If her fellowship wasn't clear and the group leader didn't understand her own issue, and if she misunderstood and became negative, then not only would that impact her self-reflection, but it

would also impact her duty later on. Also, playing games and keeping something to myself like this would be sure to disgust God. At that thought, I shared all the situations about this group leader with Wang Zhen, but I began to feel bitter the moment Wang Zhen left to handle things. Why couldn't I go out to take care of this work? Everyone saw Wang Zhen dismissing people and discerning them, but who saw my efforts behind all that? I wasn't too thrilled when I thought about how everything I'd been doing was just making Wang Zhen look good and improving her status among the others. I even complained about God putting me into such a bad situation. Why was He suddenly allowing me to be put under surveillance? Then, a few brothers and sisters wrote to us one after another about their work issues, and some specifically asked for Wang Zhen to handle them. I was even more unhappy about that. I felt like everyone only had regard for Wang Zhen, but didn't see my work behind the scenes. If that went on, wouldn't everyone say I was just a useless accessory? Even though Wang Zhen was out there running around, it wasn't easy for me at home, either. No one could see all my hard work. I wasn't happy about it so I tried to think of a way to turn things around. Though I couldn't go out and see the brothers and sisters in person, I could write letters to arrange tasks to prove I was doing plenty of work, and that I was front and center. Just then, we got letters from a few groups about some general affairs tasks that needed arranging. I wrote back with details to set them up and wrote very clearly about when Wang Zhen would go to visit them so that everyone would know I was the one arranging all this, that I was calling the shots behind the scenes.

One day, I wrote to a sister, asking her how her state was. After I wrote the letter, I wondered if she'd know that I was the one who had written the letter. If I didn't leave some clue, she might think it was Wang Zhen who

was concerned for her. That wouldn't do. I had to make sure that sister knew it was me writing. But for the sake of my safety, I couldn't sign the letter with my own name. Then I suddenly remembered that not long before, I'd recommended a hymn to that sister, so I could ask her if she'd been learning it and this way she might know it was me. With that idea, I quickly finished the letter and sent it off. I saw from the response that the sister knew I was the one who wrote it and I was so happy. I felt like I could still make myself look good even from behind the scenes and get the others to see I had realities and was able to resolve problems. So in this way, I never really saw that I wasn't in the right state. This state remained until one day when a sister told me in distress that some study documents she'd worked really hard on were sent out to the brothers and sisters by her partner, so she felt like her partner had robbed her of credit for her work, and she felt less enthusiasm for her duty. Hearing this was a real shock for me. Hadn't I been living in the very same state lately? I wasn't seeking the truth to resolve it either. So, I looked for words of God to resolve the state I was in. I read God's words that said: **"Antichrists always carry certain intentions when they act. Their words, actions, and conduct, even the specific wording they choose while speaking, are intentional; they are not acting out of momentary revelation of corruption, small stature, foolishness or ignorance, spouting nonsense wherever they go—this is not the way it is at all. By examining their methods, their way of doing things, and their choice of words, antichrists appear quite devious and wicked. For the sake of their own status and to achieve their goal of controlling people, they seize every opportunity to show off, to make use of every little bit, and they won't miss a single chance. Tell Me, would such people reveal these traits in front of Me? (Yes.) Why do you say they would? (Because their nature essence is to show off.) Is showing**

off the end goal for an antichrist? What is their goal in showing off? They want to win status, and this is what they mean: ‘Don’t you know who I am? Look at the things I’ve done, it was me who did these good things; I made quite a few contributions to god’s house. Now that you know, shouldn’t you give me more significant work? Shouldn’t you hold me in high regard? Shouldn’t you rely on me in everything you do?’ Is this not deliberate? Antichrists want to control anyone, regardless of who they are. What’s another term for control? Manipulate, toy with—they just want to govern you. For example, when brothers and sisters praise something as well done, an antichrist immediately says that they did it, making it so that everyone thanks them. Would a truly reasonable person act like this? Absolutely not. When antichrists do a little good they want everybody to know about it, to hold them in high esteem and praise them—this satisfies them” (The

Word, Vol. 4. Exposing Antichrists. Item Five: They Mislead, Draw In, Threaten, and Control People). I saw from God’s words that antichrists are constantly showing off. Everything they say and do is just to gain others’ admiration, and just a covert attempt to gain status. Considering God’s words and reflecting on the disposition I had revealed, wasn’t I just like an antichrist? I felt wronged when Wang Zhen dismissed those two sisters without mentioning me at all. I felt like it had mainly been me who had discerned them, but the credit had all gone to Wang Zhen in the end. She had been the only one to show her face, but no matter how much I did, no one would see it. Nobody would know it if I kept doing things silently. That was extremely vexing! I was racking my brains and going to great lengths to show myself off, so that the brothers and sisters would admire me and I’d have status in their eyes. It looked like I was just writing letters to arrange work, but really, I was covertly trying to remind everyone not to forget about my existence, and

that Wang Zhen was just doing some work on my behalf, but I was primarily responsible. Under the pretense of helping a sister with her state, I acted like I cared about her, to remind her of my existence and gain her admiration without letting her see my own despicable motives. I had such a deceitful disposition! If I had not read God's words, I never would have known those two sisters weren't fit for their duties. Also, many losses had been caused to the work by the time they were dismissed. That was particularly true for that group leader. Without Wang Zhen mentioning it, I wouldn't have discerned it and would have kept her in place. I hadn't been doing my work well, and not only did I lack any sense of indebtedness and guilt, but I was also shamelessly demanding credit and using despicable means to show off and gain status, trying to make everyone look up to me. I was so incredibly shameless!

Then I read another passage of God's words: **"Those who are capable of putting the truth into practice can accept God's scrutiny in the things they do. When you accept God's scrutiny, your heart will be set straight. If you only ever do things for others to see, and always want to gain others' praise and admiration, and you do not accept God's scrutiny, then is God still in your heart? Such people have no God-fearing hearts. Do not always do things for your own sake and do not constantly consider your own interests; do not consider the interests of man, and give no thought to your own pride, reputation, and status. You must first consider the interests of God's house, and make them your priority. You should be considerate of God's intentions and begin by contemplating whether or not there have been impurities in the performance of your duty, whether you have been loyal, fulfilled your responsibilities, and given it your all, as well as whether or not you have been wholeheartedly thinking about your duty and the work of**

the church. You must consider these things. If you think about them frequently and figure them out, it will be easier for you to perform your duty well” (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. Freedom and Liberation Can Be Gained Only by Casting Off One’s Corrupt Disposition). From God’s words I understood that accepting God’s scrutiny is key to practicing the truth, and we should not care what people think, but just care about satisfying God and fulfilling our duty. After that, in my letters and fellowship with others, I made an effort to have the right motives and accept God’s scrutiny instead of using the letters to gain others’ admiration and gain a place in their hearts. I thought of all those letters that Paul wrote to the churches. He never exalted or bore witness to the Lord Jesus in them and he didn’t urge believers to follow the Lord Jesus’ words. He just elevated and bore witness to himself, talking about how much he’d worked, how much he’d suffered. He said, “I was not a whit behind the very most chief apostles,” and brought people before himself, on a path against God. The letters I was writing to brothers and sisters didn’t exalt or bear witness to God either, but I was indirectly showing off. Wasn’t I essentially doing the same thing as Paul? If I didn’t repent, I’d end up eliminated and punished just like he was. Realizing this, I said a prayer to God, “God, I’m too concerned with my status. I don’t want to be controlled by it and do something to harm the church’s work. Whether I get to stand out or not, I just want to steadfastly perform my duty.”

Over the next few days, I consciously corrected my mindset, often reminding myself that the church’s interests are most important, and to do my duty well. Then one day, we received a resignation letter from Brother Chen Zhiqiang saying he wanted to quit because he wasn’t getting along well with his partners. We’d known a little bit about his issue before. Mainly, he was too arrogant and obstinate, so he didn’t work well with

others. Wang Zhen had already fellowshiped with him a few times but he hadn't changed. Now he suddenly decided to resign, it seemed like it would be difficult for us to resolve this problem. When Wang Zhen and I discussed his issues, I shared my own perspective and found a few relevant passages of God's words. Wang Zhen felt that fellowshiping in this way was appropriate. At that point it occurred to me that no matter how useful my fellowship was, Wang Zhen was the one who would actually go to fellowship with him. Who would see that it was me who was concerned and paid the price behind the scenes? That thought made me want to stop discussing with Wang Zhen, but then I thought that God was scrutinizing all my thoughts and ideas, I felt a bit troubled. Why did I always want to protect my own name and status? I thought of a passage of God's words that helped me understand the consequences of going after status. Almighty God says: **"If someone says they love the truth and that they pursue the truth, but in essence, the goal they pursue is to distinguish themselves, to show off, to make people think highly of them, to achieve their own interests, and the performing of their duty is not to submit to or satisfy God, and instead is to achieve fame, gain, and status, then their pursuit is illegitimate. That being the case, when it comes to the work of the church, are their actions an obstacle, or do they help move it forward? They are clearly an obstacle; they do not move it forward. Some people wave the banner of doing the work of the church yet pursue their own personal fame, gain, and status, run their own operation, create their own little group, their own little kingdom—is this kind of person doing their duty? All the work they do essentially disrupts, disturbs, and impairs the work of the church. What is the consequence of their pursuit of fame, gain, and status? First, this affects how God's chosen people eat and drink God's word normally and understand the truth, it**

hinders their life entry, stops them from entering the right track of faith in God, and leads them onto the wrong path—which harms the chosen ones, and brings them to ruin. And what does it ultimately do to the work of the church? It is disturbance, impairment, and dismantlement. This is the consequence brought about by people’s pursuit of fame, gain, and status. When they do their duty in this way, can this not be defined as walking the path of an antichrist?” (The Word,

Vol. 4. Exposing Antichrists. Item Nine (Part One)). I always used to think that pursuing name and status only impacted a person’s life entry and as long as we don’t commit evil, we won’t disrupt the church’s work. I didn’t understand why God detests and despises pursuing name and status so much. Reading God’s words showed me that going after name and status in my duty, and not protecting the interests of the church is sure to harm the church’s work and the brothers’ and sisters’ life entry in the end. It will obstruct and disrupt the church’s work, and that is condemned by God. When discussing Chen Zhiqiang’s problem, I didn’t want to fellowship anymore because I couldn’t be in the limelight. It didn’t seem like a big thing, but it really was serious in essence. If we delayed fellowshiping with Chen Zhiqiang to help him with his issues, it wouldn’t just hurt his life entry, it would also impact the work of the church. Holding responsibility, I should have helped out right away with someone struggling in their duty to keep the church’s work on track. Particularly with the Communist Party doing so many arrests, Wang Zhen was risking arrest every single time she went out for a gathering. If she wasn’t adequately prepared and couldn’t resolve issues in the gatherings, unable to achieve good results despite the risk she was taking, wouldn’t that be tormenting for her? I wasn’t thinking about how to resolve these problems as soon as possible or about the sister’s safety. I was solely preoccupied with her potentially stealing my thunder. I was so selfish and

lacking humanity! As a supervisor, I wasn't doing real work. I was even protecting my own status at the expense of the work of the church. I was on the path of an antichrist! I'd been solely responsible before, and I did my best no matter how hard or tiring it was. But because of the Party's arrests, I couldn't go out anymore—I could only work from behind the scenes. I was reluctant about doing my duty, always wanting to vie with Wang Zhen for the limelight. I then realized that my enthusiasm in my duty before was all just for name and status. That situation was revealing my wrong motives and pursuits, so that I could correct them in a timely manner. This was God's love for me.

Later, I read God's words that gave me more clarity on a path of practice. God's words say: **"You must achieve harmonious cooperation for the purpose of the work of God, for the benefit of the church, and so as to spur your brothers and sisters onward. You should coordinate with one another, each amending the other and arriving at a better work outcome, so as to show consideration for God's intentions. This is what true cooperation is, and only those who engage in it will gain true entry"** (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. Serve As the Israelites Did). **"What must one do to perform their duty well? One must come to perform it with all their heart and all their energy. Using all one's heart and energy means keeping all one's thoughts on performing their duty and not letting other things occupy them, and then applying the energy that one has, exerting the entirety of one's power, and bringing one's caliber, gifts, strengths, and the things they have understood to bear on the task. If you have the comprehension and understanding ability, and have a good idea, you must communicate with others about it. This is what it means to cooperate in harmony. This is how you will perform your duty well, how you will achieve satisfactory performance of your**

duty. If you wish always to take on everything yourself, if you always want to do great things alone, if you always want the focus to be on you and not others, are you performing your duty? What you are doing is called autocracy; it is putting on a show. It is satanic behavior, not the performance of duty. No one, no matter their strengths, gifts, or special talents, can take on all the work themselves; they must learn to cooperate in harmony if they are to do the church's work well. That is why harmonious cooperation is a principle of the practice of performing one's duty. As long as you apply all your heart and all your energy and all your loyalty, and offer up everything you can do, you are performing your duty well" (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. The Proper Fulfillment of Duty Requires Harmonious Cooperation). I saw from God's words that to do our duty well, we must consider God's heart and cooperate with our brothers and sisters. We have to put our all into it and use our strengths to make up for each other's weaknesses. That's how we can gain God's approval and attain good results in our work. I also saw that it didn't matter whether Wang Zhen or I showed up to resolve problems in person. As long as others' states and difficulties could be resolved, even if my effort was invisible and behind the scenes, doing my duty and satisfying God would bring me reassurance and peace. After that, I gave some thought to what truths should be fellowshiped to address Chen Zhiqiang's issue and found some relevant words of God for Wang Zhen to review. She also found some passages of God's words that were really incisive on his state that I hadn't thought of. Together, these things were even more comprehensive. At that point, I felt deeply ashamed. Though I wasn't able to go out for work, I could clearly fellowship with Wang Zhen about everything I saw and thought. Working together, we had a more comprehensive view of issues, so we could resolve them better. Wasn't that

more beneficial to the church's work? Wang Zhen went to fellowship with Chen Zhiqiang after we'd discussed everything.

Then one day, we got a letter from some brothers and sisters. The letter said that through Wang Zhen's fellowship, they'd been able to correct some errors and were doing better in their duties. I was a little disappointed after reading that. I felt like I'd discovered those errors and deviations, but all everyone saw was just Wang Zhen's work. No one saw what I was doing behind the scenes. Then it came to me that I was vying for name and gain again, so I prayed and rebelled against myself. I read a passage of God's words in an essay that was really moving for me. God's words say: **"If you try always to show off and have what you say go, you are not cooperating in harmony. What are you doing? You are causing a disturbance and undermining others. To cause a disturbance and undermine others is to play the role of Satan; it is not the performance of duty. ... You may be of little strength, but if you are capable of working with others, and are able to accept suitable suggestions, and if you have the right motivations, and can protect the work of God's house, then you are a right person. Sometimes, with a single sentence, you can solve a problem and benefit everyone; sometimes, after you fellowship on a single statement of the truth, everyone has a path to practice, and is able to work harmoniously together, and all strive toward a common goal, and share the same views and opinions, and so work is particularly effective. Although no one might remember that you played this role, and you might not feel as if you made much effort, God will see that you are a person who practices the truth, a person who acts according to the principles. God will remember your having done so. This is called performing your duty loyally"** (The Word, Vol. 3. The

Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. The Proper Fulfillment of Duty Requires Harmonious

Cooperation). It's true. Though no one could see my work behind the scenes, I was doing my duty to satisfy God. It didn't matter if other people knew. Practicing the truth and satisfying God are what matters. As a supervisor, it was my responsibility and duty and what I should do to fellowship with the others when I noticed their errors and deviations, and help them to resolve them. That was not something I should take credit for. Before, I'd always tried to show off in front of others, but now I could only work from behind the scenes. That was God's orchestration and arrangement, and it was what I needed. I had to submit to it, focus on practicing the truth in my duty, and strive to do my duty well.

When I noticed problems in our work after that, I'd take the initiative to reach out to Sister Wang Zhen. Sometimes when I wrote to brothers and sisters about issues, I wanted to make a point to show that it was me writing, but realizing I was covertly showing off and elevating myself, I'd pray and let go of my incorrect motives. I would calm myself and think about what I could write that would help the others and how I could fulfill my own responsibilities and duty. Practicing in this way really brightened my heart and felt really freeing. It's such a great way to conduct myself.

90. When Facing Illness Again

By Yang Yi, China

In 1998, I accepted Almighty God's work in the last days and welcomed the return of the Lord. Through reading God's words, I learned how God expresses the truth and does the work of judgment in the last days to cleanse and save humankind, guiding people to a beautiful destination. I thought that I should be expending, suffering, paying a price and preparing good deeds if I wanted to reach a good destination. So I started spreading the gospel and occasionally hosting, and I did my best to do whatever I could. I even donated any extra money I had to brothers and sisters living in hardship. One time while spreading the gospel, I was arrested by the police, tortured and even sentenced to jail. Even then, I never betrayed God, and was never a Judas. I thought I'd done so many good deeds and stood firm in my testimony for God, so I would definitely obtain a good destination. In 2018, I suddenly had a heart illness and then hypertension, and was admitted to the hospital twice. I thought to myself, no matter what happens, I can't complain. I should submit to God's orchestrations and arrangements. To my surprise, after just two weeks, I recovered and was released from the hospital. I was deeply grateful to God. I thought that since I hadn't complained despite getting so sick, and even continued doing my duty after being released, I was truly loyal and submissive to God. Then, in February of 2019, my heart illness and hypertension relapsed again out of nowhere and it was much worse than before. Soon after, I was also diagnosed with diabetes, and I had a really badly herniated disc. I couldn't take care of myself—I had to eat lying down and needed my daughter-in-law to carry me to the bathroom. I lay in bed all day and barely had the strength to speak or blink my eyes.

One night, my condition suddenly got worse and my heart hurt so much that I was scared to even breathe—like if I took a breath, it would all be over. I was in pain for about half an hour and I felt like I might die at any second. I thought, “I’m so sick that I barely have the strength to blink my eyes—is this the end? If I die, how will I enter the kingdom? I’ll never share in the blessings of the kingdom or glimpse its gorgeous scenery. Is it all over for me?” The more I thought the worse I felt. I prayed, but I couldn’t understand God’s intention. As time went by, the unrelenting agony of my illness made me lose the will to live. But I also knew that dying wasn’t God’s intention for me. I didn’t know what to do and I unconsciously started making demands of God, “When am I going to get better? All the sisters I know of my age are healthier than me, but I haven’t expended any less than them. I’d given so much for God and actively performed every duty I could. Even when I was arrested, jailed and suffered so much, I never denied or betrayed God. Why didn’t God protect me and give me a good healthy body?” I was constantly complaining and my heart was in a dark place. Later, only after my heart started hurting even worse, did I come before God to pray and seek, saying, “Oh God! My heart problem suddenly got worse. I can’t understand Your intention and don’t know how I should experience this. I don’t want to rebel against or oppose You. Please enlighten and guide me so that I can learn from this experience.” After prayer, a passage of God’s word came to mind: **“How should you experience sickness when it comes? You should come before God and pray, seek and grope for God’s intention; you should examine yourself to find what it is you have done that went against the truth, and what corruption in you has not been resolved. Your corrupt disposition cannot be resolved without undergoing suffering. Only in being tempered by suffering can people not be dissolute, and able to**

live before God at all times. When someone suffers, they are always at prayer. They have no thought for the pleasures of food, dress, and other enjoyments; they pray constantly in their hearts, examining themselves to see whether they have done anything wrong or where they may have gone against the truth. Normally, when you face a serious illness or strange malady that makes you suffer very badly, this does not happen by chance. Whether you are ill or in good health, God's intention is **there in that**" (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. In Believing in God, Gaining the Truth Is Most Crucial). After pondering God's words, I understood His intention more clearly. God wasn't using this sickness to take my life, nor was He making me suffer without reason. Rather, the sickness was His way of revealing my corrupt disposition and helping me learn a lesson—it was God's way of saving me. I shouldn't misunderstand or blame God, I had to really reflect on myself.

There were a few passages of God's word that helped me better understand my state later. God's word says: **"So many believe in Me only that I might heal them. So many believe in Me only that I might use My powers to drive unclean spirits out from their bodies, and so many believe in Me simply that they might receive peace and joy from Me. So many believe in Me only to demand from Me greater material wealth. So many believe in Me just to spend this life in peace and to be safe and sound in the world to come. So many believe in Me to avoid the suffering of hell and to receive the blessings of heaven. So many believe in Me only for temporary comfort, yet do not seek to gain anything in the world to come. When I brought down My fury upon man and seized all the joy and peace he once possessed, man became doubtful. When I gave unto man the suffering of hell and reclaimed the blessings of heaven, man flew into a rage. When man asked Me to heal him, I**

paid him no heed and felt abhorrence toward him; man departed from Me to instead seek the way of evil medicine and sorcery. When I took away all that man had demanded from Me, everyone disappeared without a trace. Thus, I say that man has faith in Me because I give too much grace, and because there are far too many benefits to gain” (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. What Do You Know of Faith?). **“Man’s relationship with God is merely one of naked self-interest. It is a relationship between a receiver and a giver of blessings. To put it plainly, it is the relationship between an employee and an employer. The employee works hard only to receive the rewards bestowed by the employer. There is no affection in such an interests-based relationship, only transaction. There is no loving or being loved, only charity and mercy. There is no understanding, only helpless suppressed indignation and deception. There is no intimacy, only an uncrossable chasm”** (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. Appendix 3: Man Can Only Be Saved Amidst God’s Management). **“I have held man to a strict standard throughout. If your loyalty comes with intentions and conditions, then I would rather be without your so-called loyalty, for I abhor those who deceive Me through their intentions and extort Me with conditions. I wish only for man to be absolutely loyal to Me, and to do all things for the sake of—and in order to prove—one word: faith”** (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. Are You a True Believer in God?). God’s words of judgment were like a sharp knife through the heart. I felt so ashamed and instantly came to my senses. I started to reflect on myself—what had actually been my goal in all my years of belief? After becoming a believer, I would help whenever I saw my brothers and sisters in hardships, and do whatever duties needed in the church as best I could. Even when I was arrested, jailed and tortured by the CCP, I didn’t betray God. I thought I had really done a lot of good deeds.

But through the revelation of God's words and exposure through the facts, I realized that I hadn't expended and sacrificed to submit to and satisfy God, but to gain His grace and blessings, maintain a healthy body and ultimately reach a good destination. So the first time I got sick, I thought that because I had expended so much for God, He wouldn't let me die despite my sickness, and so I didn't blame God. The second time, when my condition got even worse and I was lying in bed unable to take care of myself, as I struggled with prolonged suffering and the threat of death, I realized my chances of gaining the blessings of the kingdom of heaven were slim, and I regretted expending myself in the past. I even used my past expenditures to reason and bargain with God. I was transacting with, deceiving and using God—a far cry from truly expending for Him! I also had a fallacious view that because I had expended and sacrificed for God, God should give me a healthy body and a good destination, just as in the secular world, it's considered fair and reasonable to compensate based on how much someone works. I wanted to use my suffering and sacrifices to trade with God for a good destination, and when I didn't get it, my heart was full of complaints and opposition. I was so unreasonable! God is holy and righteous—He wants us to sacrifice sincerely. But I, with my despicable motives, wanted to make a deal with God. I was deceiving and resisting Him. If I didn't repent soon, God would become disgusted with me and eliminate me.

Later, I prayed to God and sought to understand the source of the issue. I read two passages of God's words: **“All corrupt humans live for themselves. Every man for himself and the devil take the hindmost—this is the summation of human nature. People believe in God for their own sake; when they forsake things and expend themselves for God, it is in order to be blessed, and when they are loyal to Him, it is still in order to be rewarded. In sum, it is all done for the purpose of being**

blessed, rewarded, and entering the kingdom of heaven. In society, people work for their own benefit, and in the house of God, they do a duty in order to be blessed. It is for the sake of gaining blessings that people forsake everything and can endure much suffering. There is no better evidence of man's satanic nature" (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. Part Three). **"What is Satan's poison? How can it be expressed? For example, if you ask, 'How should people live? What should people live for?' people will answer, 'Every man for himself and the devil take the hindmost.' This single phrase expresses the very root of the problem. Satan's philosophy and logic have become people's lives. No matter what people pursue, they do so for themselves—and so they live only for themselves. 'Every man for himself and the devil take the hindmost'—this is the life philosophy of man, and it also represents human nature. These words have already become the nature of corrupt mankind and they are the true portrait of corrupt mankind's satanic nature. This satanic nature has already become the basis for corrupt mankind's existence. For several thousand years, corrupt mankind has lived by this venom of Satan, right up to the present day"** (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. How to Walk the Path of Peter). What God's words exposed was exactly how I was. The reason I'd made transactions with God and deceived and used Him is because I'd been deeply corrupted by Satan. My thoughts and views had all been influenced by Satan's poison. I lived according to satanic logic and principles like "Every man for himself and the devil take the hindmost," and "Never take the short end of the stick," always acting out of self-interest, and only expending for God in order to make a deal with Him. I was always looking to get something from God and to trade my small expenditures for God's great grace and blessings. I lived by Satan's poison and was selfish, despicable and only sought

personal gain. When I didn't receive blessings or benefits, I even complained against God. I didn't have the slightest bit of humanity! I thought of how, in order to save humanity, God had, in His first incarnation, suffered crucifixion to redeem all mankind, and in His second incarnation, He came to the country of the great red dragon, and was persecuted by the CCP and condemned and rejected by the religious world. God endured enormous suffering and humiliation and still expressed the truth to water and supply us. God has never asked us to give Him anything, but has always been quietly expending Himself for mankind. As for me, I didn't think to repay God's love, and even demanded that God give me peace and a good destination. When I didn't get what I wanted, I complained against God. Where was my conscience? I was barely worthy of being called human, much less did I deserve to enter into God's kingdom. After I realized all this, I really hated myself, and also felt so grateful to God. If I hadn't been sick, bedridden and faced with the threat of death, I never would have reflected on myself, nor would I have realized that my views on faith were detestable to God, and that if I continued like this, I would never achieve true submission to Him. It was the judgment and exposure of God's words and the illness that prompted me to reflect and turn back to Him. This was God's salvation and His love for me. I felt so touched and prayed to God, "Dear God! I see now that this sickness is a part of Your salvation and love for me. I'm willing to submit. Only through this kind of hardship and refinement can I identify my improper motives as a believer and start to transform my corrupt disposition. I'm willing to change my mistaken views on pursuits and do my duty as a created being." I read another passage of God's words: **"There is no correlation between the duty of man and whether he is blessed or cursed. Duty is what man ought to fulfill; it is his heaven-sent vocation, and should not depend on recompense,**

conditions, or reasons. Only then is he doing his duty. To be blessed is when someone is made perfect and enjoys God's blessings after experiencing judgment. To be cursed is when someone's disposition does not change after they have experienced chastisement and judgment, it is when they do not experience being made perfect but are punished. But regardless of whether they are blessed or cursed, created beings should fulfill their duty, doing what they ought to do, and doing what they are able to do; this is the least that a person, a person who pursues God, should do. You should not do your duty only to be blessed, and you should not refuse to act for fear of being cursed. Let Me tell you this one thing: Man's performance of his duty is what he ought to do, and if he is incapable of performing his duty, then this is his rebelliousness" (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. The Difference Between the Ministry of God Incarnate and the Duty of Man). Reading God's words, I understood that I am a created being. Sacrificing and expending for God is perfectly natural and justified, and it is my duty. I shouldn't be making demands or setting conditions for God, but I, with my despicable motives, wanted God to give me a good destination in exchange for my expenditures. I was being so unreasonable! Whether or not I had a healthy body and a good destination, I should still follow God and expend myself for Him in my duties, just like a child should always respect their parents regardless of how their parents treat them and whether or not they can inherit property because these are human responsibilities. Even though I still hadn't recovered and felt pretty awful, I no longer misunderstood God or complained against Him. Whether or not I would recover, I was willing to submit to God's orchestrations and arrangements.

Afterward, I reflected and realized that I was actually unclear about what counts as a good deed and what kinds of expending and sacrificing

will earn God's approval. In the words of God I found the standard to measure it. God's words say: **"What is the standard by which a person's actions and behavior are judged to be good or evil? It is whether or not they, in their thoughts, revelations, and actions, possess the testimony of putting the truth into practice and of living out the truth reality. If you do not have this reality or live this out, then without doubt, you are an evildoer. How does God regard evildoers? To God, your thoughts and external acts do not bear testimony for Him, nor do they humiliate and defeat Satan; instead, they bring shame to Him, and they are riddled with marks of the dishonor that you have brought upon Him. You are not testifying for God, you are not expending yourself for God, nor are you fulfilling your responsibilities and obligations to God; instead, you are acting for your own sake. What does 'for your own sake' mean? To be precise, it means for Satan's sake. Therefore, in the end, God will say, 'Depart from Me, you that work iniquity.' In God's eyes, your actions will not be seen as good deeds, they will be considered evil deeds. Not only will they fail to gain God's approval—they will be condemned. What does one hope to gain from such a belief in God? Would such belief not come to naught in the end?"** (The Word, Vol.

3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. Freedom and Liberation Can Be Gained Only by Casting Off One's Corrupt Disposition). **"Since you are certain that this way is true, you must follow it until the end; you must maintain your devotion to God. Since you have seen that God Himself has come to the earth to perfect you, you should give your heart entirely to Him. If you can still follow Him no matter what He does, even if He determines an unfavorable outcome for you at the very end, this is maintaining your purity in front of God. Offering a holy spiritual body and a pure virgin to God means keeping a sincere heart in front of God. For mankind,**

sincerity is purity, and the ability to be sincere toward God is maintaining purity” (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. You Should Maintain Your Devotion to God). After reading God’s words, I understood that God wants us to be sincere, to willingly sacrifice for God without asking to be repaid and to practice the truth and bear witness for God in our duties. This is what is truly meant by good deeds. I had a one-sided understanding of good deeds before. I thought that as long as I expended, suffered and paid a price, I was building up good deeds. Then I thought of how in the Age of Grace, the Lord Jesus had approved of the poor widow who gave an offering. To most people, it seemed like she’d only offered a couple of coins, which was worth very little, but God doesn’t care how much people offer, He cares about their intention. Although in my duties, I had expended myself and given a lot, I wasn’t being sincere with God; my expending was transactional and impure. No matter how much I gave in this way, it would never be considered a good deed. After realizing God’s intention, I prayed to Him, saying that whether or not I would recover or have a good destination, I would still sincerely expend myself for God to repay His love. Later, I was no longer constrained by my illness or bound by my intention for blessings—I could regularly eat and drink the words of God, attend gatherings and do my duty to the best of my ability.

After some time, I slowly started to get better. Now I can sit up and write on a computer and I’ve been practicing writing articles to bear witness for God. I can take care of myself now too. I thank God from the bottom of my heart, for using illness to help me learn a lesson. I see that even in sickness and hardship, there is God’s goodwill, all for the sake of our salvation. As God’s words say: **“In their belief in God, what people seek is to obtain blessings for the future; this is their goal in their faith. All people have this intent and hope, but the corruption in their nature**

must be resolved through trials and refinement. In whichever aspects you are not purified and reveal corruption, these are the aspects in which you must be refined—this is God’s arrangement. God creates an environment for you, forcing you to be refined there so that you can know your own corruption. Ultimately, you reach a point at which you would rather die in order to give up your schemes and desires and to submit to God’s sovereignty and arrangement. Therefore, if people do not have several years of refinement, if they do not endure a certain amount of suffering, they will not be able to rid themselves of the constraints of corruption of the flesh in their thoughts and in their hearts. In whichever aspects people are still subject to the constraints of their satanic nature, and in whichever aspects they still have their own desires and their own demands, these are the aspects in which they should suffer. Only through suffering can lessons be learned, which means being able to gain truth, and understand God’s intentions” (The

Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. Part Three).

91. I'll No Longer Take a Hands-Off Approach

By Martha, Italy

In June of 2021, I supervised video work at the church, and because the workload increased, the church arranged for me to follow up on one more group's work. I thought, "I'm busy enough with the work I'm responsible for now. If I supervise even more work, won't I be even busier and more tired?" But I also thought, "The brothers and sisters in this group are familiar with the work. They're all experienced and do their duty effectively, so I shouldn't have to worry too much about the follow-up, and it won't take much time and effort." So I agreed to follow up on the other group. At first, from time to time I would ask if the group's work was making normal progress, and if any of the brothers and sisters were having difficulties doing their duty. However, later I thought I also had other work to do, and trying to understand the details of each group's work would be too mentally exhausting and time-consuming. That group's work was progressing normally, so everything was fine, and I didn't need to spend time to understand things. The group leader was also there, and the brothers and sisters were reliable and did their duty well. For the past few years, there hadn't been any major problems, so basically there was no need to worry. Following up a little less couldn't be a problem, could it? That being the case, I hardly got involved in that group's work.

One day, more than two months later, one of the brothers gave me feedback, and said that in two cases, videos produced by that group had problems recently, and if other sisters hadn't discovered the problems in time, work progress would have been delayed. I was a bit surprised, as a series of serious problems had appeared as the group did its duties. How come I didn't know? Thinking back, I had been responsible for that work

for several months, but paid little attention to that group's work, and had no idea how the group members were doing their duty. I realized that I wasn't doing the real work, and that's what caused these problems. Afterward, when I understood the situation, I discovered that for some time no one supervised or followed up on the group's work, so the group members just did things based on their experience and existing routines, without a sense of burden toward doing their duty. So as soon as the workload increased, they started to do things in a perfunctory way. Although two people worked together to inspect the videos, for them it was just a formality. They were just going through the motions and couldn't discover problems. Facing up to all this was painful. These problems weren't difficult to discover, and if I had done normal follow-up on that group's work, I wouldn't have been so clueless. I was so irresponsible! I had to self-reflect as to why I ignored their work for over three months. I read in God's word, which says: **"False leaders never ask about or follow up on the work situations of various team supervisors. They also don't ask about, follow up on, or have a grasp on the life entry of supervisors of different teams and personnel responsible for various important jobs, as well as their attitudes toward church work and their duties, and toward faith in God, the truth, and God Himself. They don't know whether these individuals have undergone any transformation or growth, nor do they know about the various issues that may exist in their work; in particular, they do not know about the impact of errors and deviations occurring in various stages of the work on the work of the church and the life entry of God's chosen people, along with whether these errors and deviations have ever been corrected. They are entirely ignorant about all of these things. If they know nothing about these detailed conditions, they become passive whenever problems arise. However, false leaders don't**

bother with these detailed issues at all while doing their job. They believe that after arranging various team supervisors and assigning tasks, their work is done—it counts as having done the job well, and if other problems arise it's none of their concern. Because false leaders fail to supervise, guide, and follow up on various team supervisors, and they do not fulfill their responsibilities in these areas, this results in a mess being made of the church's work. This is the leaders and workers being derelict in their duties. God can scrutinize the depths of the human heart; this is an ability that humans lack. Therefore, when working, people need to be more diligent and attentive, regularly going to the work site to follow up on, supervise, and guide the work in order to ensure the normal progress of the church work. Clearly, false leaders are utterly irresponsible in their work, and they never supervise, follow up on, or guide various tasks. As a result, some supervisors do not know how to resolve various issues that arise in the work, and remain in their roles as supervisors despite not being nearly competent enough to do the work. Ultimately, the work is delayed again and again and they make a complete mess of it. This is the consequence of false leaders not asking about, supervising, or following up on the supervisors' situations, an outcome which is entirely caused by the false leaders' dereliction of duty" (The Word, Vol. 5. The Responsibilities of Leaders and Workers. The Responsibilities of Leaders and Workers (3)). From God's word, I saw that false leaders neglect their duties and don't do real work. They think each group has a supervisor, so the false leaders can take a hands-off approach, which causes problems in the church's work. On the surface, it may seem like false leaders aren't doing anything that is clearly evil. But they don't have a sense of responsibility about the church's work, which seriously affects the progress and effectiveness of various tasks, and that disrupts and

disturbs the work of the church. God requires leaders and workers to follow up and supervise work in a timely manner to ensure that the church's work is making regular, orderly progress. That is their responsibility and duty. But after I took on that group's work, I felt that the group leader was there, and all the work proceeded in an orderly fashion, so it made sense to take a hands-off approach. I never inspected or followed up on their work, nor did I understand the details of the existing deviations and problems in everyone's work. I also didn't discover when they were slack and perfunctory in doing their duty. Based on my own notions and imaginings, I thought they were reliable and conscientious in doing their duty, and completely trustworthy. So I acted accordingly, which as a result caused losses to the work. In light of God's word, I knew that I was negligent in doing my duty, and was indeed a false leader. Although I didn't intentionally do evil, problems lingered and weren't resolved because I didn't do actual work. Problems cropped up in the videos they produced, so they had to be redone, which was directly related to my being perfunctory and irresponsible in doing my duty. Taking a perfunctory approach and trying to take it easy, I didn't follow up on or supervise the work. Although that saved me a lot of time and energy, it directly delayed work progress, disrupting and disturbing the work of the church. I was resisting God! That thought struck fear in my heart, and I continuously reflected on myself and thought, "How could I take a hands-off approach for so long without realizing it?"

Later on, I read a passage from God's word, and came to a better understanding of the fact that I wasn't doing actual work. Almighty God says: **"False leaders never inquire about supervisors who are not doing actual work, or who are not tending to their proper work. They think they just need to choose a supervisor and that's the end of the matter,**

and that afterward the supervisor can handle all work matters themselves. So false leaders just hold gatherings every so often, and do not supervise the work or ask how it's going, and act like hands-off bosses. ... They are incapable of doing real work themselves, and they aren't meticulous regarding the work of team leaders and supervisors either—they do not follow up on it or inquire about it. Their view of people is only based on their own impressions and imaginings. When they see someone performing well for a time, they think that this person will be good forever, that they will not change; they do not believe anyone who says there is a problem with this person, and they ignore it when someone warns them about that person. Do you think false leaders are stupid? They are stupid and foolish. What makes them stupid? They blithely put their trust in a person, believing that because when this person was chosen, they swore an oath, and made a resolution, and prayed with tears streaming down their face, that means they are dependable, and there will never be any issues with them taking charge of work in the future. False leaders have no understanding of people's natures; they are ignorant of the true situation of corrupt mankind. They say, 'How could someone change for the worse when they have been chosen as a supervisor? How could someone who seems so intense and reliable shirk their work? They wouldn't, would they? They have a lot of integrity.' Because false leaders have put too much faith in their own imaginings and feelings, this ultimately renders them incapable of timely resolving the many problems that arise in church work, and stops them from promptly dismissing and reassigning the supervisor involved. They are bona fide false leaders. And just what is the issue here? Does false leaders' approach to their work have anything to do with perfunctoriness? In

one respect, they see the great red dragon rabidly carrying out arrests of God's chosen people, so to keep themselves safe, they randomly arrange for someone to be in charge of work, believing that this will solve the problem, and that they don't need to pay it any more attention. What do they think in their hearts? 'This is such a hostile environment, I should hide for a while.' This is coveting fleshly comforts, is it not? In another respect, false leaders have a fatal flaw: They are quick to trust people based on their own imaginings. And this is caused by not understanding the truth, is it not? How does God's word reveal the essence of corrupt humankind? Why should they trust in people when God doesn't? False leaders are too arrogant and self-righteous, are they not? What they think is, 'I couldn't have misjudged this person, there shouldn't be any problems with this person that I've judged to be suitable; they are definitely not someone who indulges in eating, drinking and entertainment, or who likes comfort and hates hard work. They are absolutely dependable and trustworthy. They will not change; if they did, that would mean I was wrong about them, wouldn't it?' What kind of logic is this? Are they some kind of expert? Do they have x-ray vision? Do they have that special skill? You could live with a person for one or two years, but would you be able to see who they really are without a suitable environment to lay their nature essence utterly bare? If they were not revealed by God, you could live side-by-side with them for three, or even five, years, and would still struggle to see just what kind of nature essence they have. And how much more is that true when you rarely see them, are rarely with them? False leaders blithely trust a person based on a fleeting impression or someone else's positive appraisal of them, and dare to entrust the work of the church to such a person. In this, are they not

being extremely blind? Are they not acting recklessly? And when they work like this, are the false leaders not being extremely irresponsible?”

(The Word, Vol. 5. The Responsibilities of Leaders and Workers. The Responsibilities of Leaders and Workers (3)). God’s word exposes that false leaders are lazy, stupid, and foolish. Instead of viewing people and things based on God’s word, they see them based on their own notions and imaginings. Yet they feel they have insight into people and things. They can casually trust someone and hand work over to other people, while they themselves take a hands-off approach and covet the benefits of status. Through the exposure of God’s word, I saw that I was that lazy and stupid false leader! Because of my lazy nature, I always felt I was responsible for so much work that if I followed up on every group and understood the details, it would take too much trouble and effort. So I mainly followed up on the work of one group. Since the other group had a group leader, as long as the work progressed normally, everything would be fine, and I didn’t need to spend more time to follow up. My approach to my duty was that the less I had to worry about the better. Although I held the title of supervisor, I actually took a hands-off approach, which was so irresponsible! I was also very conceited. Based on my own notions and imaginings, I thought everyone in that group was reliable in doing their duty. So I didn’t have to worry, and if I didn’t follow up on their work they would continue to do their duty well. I didn’t ask about or supervise them for several months, which caused these problems to appear in their work. I didn’t understand the truth or see matters clearly, and had a strong belief in myself, thinking that my judgment about people couldn’t be wrong. I was too arrogant and stupid! Knowing all that, I was filled with regret, and realized the importance of treating people and my duty according to God’s word. So I consciously sought out the relevant passages in God’s word to find a path to do my duty.

One day, I read a passage of God's word that says: **"Because false leaders do not learn about the progress of the work, and because they are incapable of promptly identifying—much less solving—problems that arise in it, this often leads to repeated delays. In certain work, because people have no grasp of the principles and there is no one suitable to be responsible for it or preside over it, those carrying out the work are often in a state of negativity, passivity, and waiting, which severely affects the progress of the work. If the leader had fulfilled their responsibilities—if they had presided over the work, pushed it forward, supervised it, and found someone who understands that field to guide the work, then the work would have progressed faster rather than suffering repeated delays. For leaders, then, it is vital to understand and grasp the status of the work. Of course, it is also very necessary for leaders to understand and grasp how the work is progressing, as progress relates to the efficiency of the work and the results it's supposed to achieve. If leaders and workers do not have a grasp on how the church's work is progressing, and they do not follow up on or supervise things, then the progress of the church's work is bound to be slow. This is due to the fact that the majority of people doing duties are seriously scummy, do not have a sense of burden, and are often negative, passive, and perfunctory. If there is nobody with a sense of burden and work capabilities taking responsibility for the work in a concrete manner, learning about the progress of the work in a timely manner, and guiding, supervising, disciplining, and pruning personnel who do duties, then naturally, the level of work efficiency is going to be very low and the results of the work are going to be very poor. If leaders and workers can't even see this clearly, they are foolish and blind. And so, leaders and workers must promptly look into, follow up**

on, and grasp the progress of work, look into what problems people doing duties have that need to be resolved, and understand which problems should be resolved in order to achieve better results. These things are all very crucial, a person acting as a leader must be clear on these things. To do your duty well, you must not be like a false leader, who does some superficial work and then thinks they've done their duty well" (The Word, Vol. 5. The Responsibilities of Leaders and Workers. The Responsibilities of Leaders and Workers (4)).

God's word shows people the path to doing their duty to an acceptable standard. As a leader or supervisor, people have to approach their duty with a sense of burden, and cannot covet the comforts of the flesh. They must follow up on, look in on, supervise, and inspect the work they're responsible for in a timely manner. Leaders and supervisors should also follow up and understand the state of the staff involved, and the details about how they do their duty. That way, problems can be detected promptly and deviations rectified. Because no human being has yet been perfected, everyone has a corrupt disposition. So if people's state is good and they are conscientious, responsible, and effective in doing their duty for a period of time, that doesn't mean they are completely reliable. When their states are abnormal or they live according to their corrupt disposition, they then become perfunctory in spite of themselves, and do things that disturb the work of the church. So as people perform their duties, leaders, workers, and supervisors need to inspect and follow up on the work, and when problems are discovered, they should rectify the deviations promptly. This is their responsibility. After I understood God's requirements, I began to follow up and learn more about the group's work, and regularly gathered them together for work summary meetings. When I found deviations and problems, I promptly communicated about them together with the group leader. Through follow-up work, I discovered that everyone's work was

rather undisciplined and lacked planning. So I discussed the group's work plan and progress with the group leader, and some backlogged work was completed as scheduled. In addition, we streamlined staffing based on the workload, and arranged to send some of our staff where they were needed more. After carrying out that kind of practice, I felt much more at ease. At the same time, I followed up on the work within my scope of responsibility more closely than before.

A while later, I took on new work that required a lot of time. I thought, "For some time, I followed up on the work of each group in detail, so now things are stable. If I still have to worry about and get involved in the details of each group, it will take too much time and effort. That will make my schedule too tight and give me too much pressure." I wondered which group's work I could delegate to someone else so I would have less to worry about. I thought of one group with two group leaders who were more proactive in doing their duty and able to pay a price. I wanted to transfer the group's work to them so they could follow up in detail. Then I would only have to watch the direction of things, and regularly attend gatherings to summarize the work. I could leave everything else to the group leaders. But by doing that, I was going back to my old ways, just focusing on the new work I had taken on and not getting involved in the details of this group's work. I thought that since the group leaders were there, it would be fine. If there were any problems, I could just wait for them to take the initiative to inform me, and then deal with it. One day, one of the group leaders pointed out that I wasn't doing enough follow-up work, and I wasn't involved in the details of their work. Some of the group's brothers and sisters were procrastinating and lazy in doing their duty, but there was no follow-up or resolution, which affected work progress. When I heard that, I got a little defensive and thought, "You two group leaders could do that, couldn't you?"

For some time now, I've taken on some other work. If I have to follow up on the details of every task, it would take a lot of time. How could I ever get it all done? Your demands are excessive!" But my arguments made me feel a little uneasy again. Looking back on that time period, I rarely followed up on their work, and I didn't understand the brothers' and sisters' states, whether they entered principles in doing their duty, or the results of their work. At that time, I pondered that in the past, I transgressed in my duty by taking a hands-off approach, so how could I be in the same state again?

Later on, I read God's word: **"Many people behind My back covet the benefits of status, they gorge themselves on food, they love to sleep and give every care to the flesh, always afraid that there is no way out for the flesh. They do not perform their proper function in the church, but freeload off the church, or else they admonish their brothers and sisters with My words, constraining others from positions of authority. These people keep saying they are following God's will and always say they are God's intimates—is this not absurd? If you have the right motivation, but are unable to serve in accordance with God's intentions, then you are being foolish; but if your motivation is not right, and you still say you serve God, then you are someone who opposes God, and you ought to be punished by God! I have no sympathy for such people! In the house of God, they freeload, always coveting the comforts of the flesh, and give no consideration to the interests of God. They always seek what is good for them, and they pay no heed to God's intentions. They do not accept the scrutiny of God's Spirit in anything they do. They are always being crooked and deceitful and cheating their brothers and sisters, being two-faced, like a fox in a vineyard, always stealing grapes and trampling over the vineyard. Could such people be God's intimates? Are you fit to receive God's**

blessings? You take no burden for your life and the church, are you fit to receive God's commission? Who would dare trust someone like you? When you serve like this, could God entrust you with a greater task? Would this not cause delays to the work?" (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. How to Serve in Harmony With God's Intentions). **"It doesn't matter how talented you are, what level of caliber and education you possess, how many slogans you can shout, or how many words and doctrines are in your grasp; regardless of how busy you are or how exhausted you are in a day, or how far you've traveled, how many churches you visit, or how much risk you take and suffering you endure—none of these matter. What matters is whether you are performing your work based on the work arrangements, whether you are accurately implementing those arrangements; whether, during your leadership, you are participating in every specific work you are responsible for, and how many real issues you have actually resolved; how many individuals have come to understand the truth principles because of your leadership and guidance, and how much the church's work has advanced and developed—what matters is whether or not you have achieved these results. Regardless of the specific work you're involved in, what matters is whether you are consistently following up on and directing the work rather than acting high and mighty and issuing orders. Besides this, what also matters is whether or not you have life entry while doing your duty, whether you can deal with matters according to principles, whether you possess a testimony of putting the truth into practice, and whether you can handle and resolve the real issues faced by God's chosen people. These and other similar things are all criteria for assessing whether or not a leader or worker has fulfilled their responsibilities"** (The Word, Vol. 5. The Responsibilities of Leaders and Workers. The

Responsibilities of Leaders and Workers (9)). From God's word, I saw that He extremely detests and resents people who always covet the benefits of status, are cunning and play tricks, and consider their own fleshly interests in doing their duties. That kind of person can't play any positive role in promoting the church's work, nor can they promptly discover and rectify deviations and gaps in their duty. Their irresponsibility can even bring losses to their duty, and disrupt and disturb the work of the church. Such people utterly lack sincerity in doing their duty, and are unworthy to receive God's commission. If they don't repent, ultimately God will detest and eliminate them! In addition, God's standard for measuring leaders and workers is not how much work they do, or how many roads they travel, but whether they do real work and produce actual results in doing their duty. The exposure of God's word made me feel ashamed. By putting me in charge of making videos, the church had given me such an important job, asked me to carry a greater load, and promoted and trained me. I, on the other hand, didn't take responsibility, and was unwilling to suffer in doing my duty. When the workload increased a little bit, I only thought about how I could suffer less and worry less. I was afraid that more worry would exhaust me. When the brothers and sisters pointed out that in doing my duty, I didn't do any actual work, I kept looking for all kinds of excuses to absolve myself. This is how God described someone like me: **"In the house of God, they freeload, always coveting the comforts of the flesh, and give no consideration to the interests of God. They always seek what is good for them."** As a supervisor, I should have followed up on and monitored all the work within the scope of my responsibility in a timely manner, and promptly resolved deviations and gaps that I found to ensure the normal progress of the church's work. That was my duty. But I was tricky, cunning, and avoided responsibility. I had a position as a supervisor

but didn't do actual work, and didn't follow up on work details. As a result, I didn't promptly find or resolve the group's existing problems. So the work wasn't very effective, which had a negative impact on the normal progress of the church's work. How could that be considered doing my duty? Obviously, that was holding a position without doing actual work, being blatantly deceitful. I was so untrustworthy! The church arranged for me to do some work and asked me to take some responsibility, but I took a hands-off approach. I really didn't deserve to do such important work. If I was always so irresponsible about my duty and didn't do actual work, God would ultimately detest and eliminate me! That thought frightened me. So I prayed to God to ask Him to guide me so I could turn this state around. I wanted to be conscientious and attentive in my work, and fulfill my responsibilities and duty.

Later on, I found a path of practice in God's word: **"People who truly believe in God perform their duties willingly, without calculating their own gains and losses. No matter whether you are someone who pursues the truth, you must rely on your conscience and reason and really make an effort when you perform your duty. What does it mean to really make an effort? If you are merely satisfied with making some token effort, and suffering a little physical hardship, but you do not take your duty seriously at all or seek the truth principles, then this is nothing more than being perfunctory—it is not really making an effort. The key to making an effort is putting your heart into it, fearing God in your heart, being considerate of God's intentions, being terrified of rebelling against God and hurting God, and suffering any hardship in order to perform your duty well and satisfy God: If you have a God-loving heart in this way, you will be able to perform your duty properly. If there is no fear of God in your heart, you will have no burden when**

you perform your duty, will have no interest in it, and will inevitably be perfunctory, and go through the motions, without producing any real effect—which is not performing a duty. If you truly have a sense of burden, and feel like performing your duty is your personal responsibility, and that if you don't, you are not fit to live, and are a beast, that only if you perform your duty properly are you worthy of being called a human being, and can face your own conscience—if you have this sense of burden when you perform your duty—then you will be able to do everything conscientiously, and will be able to seek the truth and do things according to the principles, and so will be able to do your duty properly and satisfy God. If you are worthy of the mission that God has given you, and of all that God has sacrificed for you and His expectations of you, then this is really making an effort” (The Word,

Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. To Perform One's Duty Well, One Must at Least Be Possessed of a Conscience and Reason). After reading God's word, I felt a tremendous sense of shame. For years, I believed in God and ate and drank so much of His word. But when doing my duty required making a little more effort and putting more thought into it, I thought it was too much trouble and too tiring, so I took a hands-off approach. I was too selfish and lazy, totally insincere toward God, and bore no real burden in doing my duty. I was a supervisor, but didn't do the work a supervisor should do. That was truly a dereliction of duty! Even a family dog can watch over the house and be loyal and devoted to its owner. I am a created being, but I didn't fulfill the duty of a created being. Did I deserve to be called human? I thought about the many brothers and sisters in the church that were responsible for more work than me. They were sincere about doing their duty, and could suffer and pay a price. They spent more time doing their duty, but I never saw any of them collapse from exhaustion. Instead, the

more they were considerate of God's intention, the more they harvested, and the more they continued to make progress in life. Thinking back, my workload was reasonable and certainly achievable. As long as I was willing to rebel against the flesh, suffer a little bit more, and pay more price, it was absolutely possible to follow up on the work of each group. After that, I rearranged my work schedule, followed up on everything I was responsible for based on the new schedule, and there were no work delays in my area of supervision. One day, I was reading group messages, and discovered some deviations in one group's work. I quickly analyzed and summarized the situation with the group leader, and together, we found ways to resolve the problems. At the time, I lamented that doing actual work doesn't mean spending all day just staring at people in the group while doing nothing else. It just takes putting a little more heart into it. After that, I made appointments with each member of the group to learn about their work, and once again discovered some deviations. So the group leader and I fellowshiped with them about principles. The deviations were quickly rectified, and thereafter work effectiveness improved. Although I was a little busier those couple of days, that kind of practice made me feel peaceful and at ease.

Through these experiences, I came to a better understanding of my selfishness and laziness. I also saw that being irresponsible and coveting comfort not only delays work progress, but when serious, can disrupt and disturb the work of the church. So I can no longer take a hands-off approach. I must supervise and follow up on the work often, and actually identify and resolve problems. Doing my duty that way is the only way to achieve good results, and satisfy God's intention.

92. What Comes of Shielding a False Leader

By Li Yang, China

In late October 2020, I was dismissed from my role as a leader for failing to do real work and I went back to my local church. Due to the CCP's arrest, there were some safety issues at my home, so I was temporarily unable to attend gatherings. I was feeling really negative and weak. A sister named Li Yan who lived in my village was a leader in another church. Though I wasn't a member of the church she oversaw, she would ask about my state whenever we met and read God's words to help me. I was really grateful to her because she did not look down on me for being dismissed as a false leader and even helped me out. I thought, "If she has any problems in the future, I will help her as best I can."

A few months later, I took over cleansing work in the church and worked with Li Yan a lot. I noticed that she was often late for gatherings due to personal matters and during gatherings she just went through the motions and rarely fellowshiped God's words. When brothers and sisters couldn't discern disbelievers, antichrists or evil people, she didn't fellowship with them on the truth principles. I also heard from a church deacon that she'd often get into spats with her partnered sister over the smallest issues, which meant gatherings couldn't go ahead normally. Hearing this made me pretty angry. I thought that as a leader, Li Yan had not only failed to do real work, but was also disturbing church life, and that this would delay the others' life entry and the church's work. I sought her out to fellowship with her and to point out she wasn't doing real work. I also warned her that if she continued on like this, she'd become a false leader. But she didn't seem to care at all, and said, "Fine then, I'm a false leader. Since I'm not fellowshiping the truth with them, why don't you?"

After that, I noticed that a few church members were spreading negativity and disturbing church life a lot. I asked Li Yan to get a sense of everyone's assessment of them to see if they were disbelievers and should be cleared out. But she made an excuse, saying she was busy, and kept putting it off, which allowed those church members to continue disturbing church life. Seeing how careless of an attitude she had toward church work, I pointed out her problems to her again, but she still argued back. I realized that Li Yan continually failed to do real work, didn't accept fellowship and guidance, and had already delayed the church's work. Judging by principles, I thought she was very likely a false leader and so I wanted to report her situation to the upper leaders. But then I thought, "She helped me before when I was feeling negative and treated me so well. If she finds out that I reported her to the upper leaders, will she become biased against me? If that leads to her being dismissed, will she say I lack a conscience? Perhaps if I don't report her now and just fellowship a bit more, she'll change." So, I fellowshiped on the significance of the church's cleansing work with her as well as how she should approach her duty. But after a period of time, Li Yan still wasn't doing real work, and she still hadn't gotten assessments of those church members. I also heard that Li Yan was irresponsible in her work and had failed to oversee resource management in the church, which led to quite a few items being damaged, causing the church serious financial losses. After that, she didn't self-reflect and even tried to shift the blame, saying others hadn't stored the items properly. I saw that she didn't do any real work. She was careless in her attitude toward the various items of the church work, and didn't accept criticism. When there were obstructions to the church's work and its property was damaged, she didn't feel the slightest bit guilty. Wasn't that the sign of a false leader? But I didn't report her issues in a timely manner. When I realized this, I felt

quite guilty. I saw a passage of God's words: **"All of you say you are considerate of God's burden and will defend the testimony of the church, but who among you has really been considerate of God's burden? Ask yourself: Are you someone who has shown consideration for His burden? Can you practice righteousness for Him? Can you stand up and speak for Me? Can you steadfastly put the truth into practice? Are you bold enough to fight against all of Satan's deeds? Would you be able to set your feelings aside and expose Satan for the sake of My truth? Can you allow My intentions to be satisfied in you? Have you offered up your heart in the most crucial of moments? Are you someone who follows My will? Ask yourself these questions, and think about them often"** (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. Utterances of Christ in the Beginning, Chapter 13). I felt like God's words were calling me to account. Especially when I saw the part that said: **"Are you someone who has shown consideration for His burden? Can you practice righteousness for Him?" "Are you bold enough to fight against all of Satan's deeds?"** I felt particularly ashamed and guilty. God hopes that we can consider His intention and quickly take a stand to expose and stop people who disrupt and disturb church work to protect the church's interests. I had known Li Yan for quite some time and had seen how she didn't do real work and didn't accept criticism, and I knew very well that if she wasn't dismissed, the church's work and the brothers' and sisters' life entry would both suffer losses. But I thought about how she'd helped me before, and worried that she'd hate me once she found out I reported her and say I lacked a conscience. So to protect our relationship, I didn't want to report her problems, even when I clearly saw her failing to do real work, causing several disbelievers to not be cleared out of the church promptly and continue disturbing church life. I was so selfish and despicable! By

violating the truth principles, abetting and shielding a false leader, and allowing her to disturb church life, hadn't I become a shield for this false leader and shared in her evil doings? Realizing this, I hated myself for not reporting Li Yan in time and decided to report on her issues to the leaders right away.

After doing that, the upper leaders had me collect brothers' and sisters' assessments of Li Yan and then it could be decided based on her consistent performance if she should be dismissed. The leaders also said that if she was determined to be a false leader, I was to go along with them and dismiss Li Yan. I felt some hesitation when the upper leaders said that, thinking, "Li Yan helped me a lot after I was dismissed before. If I expose her and help the others discern her, she will say I lack a conscience." I felt so torn and didn't want to expose her. I realized my state was wrong, so I prayed to God, seeking to resolve my misgivings. I came across this passage of God's words: **"Who is Satan, who are demons, and who are God's enemies if not resisters who do not believe in God? Are they not those people who are rebellious against God? Are they not those who claim to have faith, yet who lack truth? Are they not those who merely seek to obtain blessings while being unable to bear witness for God? You still mingle with those demons today and treat them with conscience and love, but in this case are you not extending good intentions toward Satan? Are you not in league with demons? If people have made it to this point and are still unable to distinguish between good and evil, and continue to blindly be loving and merciful without any desire to seek God's intentions or being able in any way to take God's intentions as their own, then their endings will be all the more wretched. Anyone who does not believe in the God in the flesh is an enemy of God. If you can bear conscience and love toward an enemy,**

do you not lack a sense of justice? If you are compatible with those which I detest and with which I disagree, and still bear love or personal feelings toward them, then are you not rebellious? Are you not intentionally resisting God? Does such a person possess truth? If people bear conscience toward enemies, love for demons, and mercy for Satan, then are they not intentionally disrupting God's work?" (The Word, Vol. 1.

The Appearance and Work of God. God and Man Will Enter Into Rest Together). God's words really hit home with me. The passage clearly stated that people who seek the truth and uphold the church's work should be treated with love, while those who are averse to the truth and disrupt and disturb the church's work should be loathed and rejected. But even though I clearly saw that Li Yan wasn't doing real work and was disrupting and disturbing the church's work, I still showed her kindness and didn't report her right away. Then, when it was time to expose her and help the others gain discernment and learn lessons, I was beset by worries, and concerned that she would hate me and say I was an ungrateful traitor. So I betrayed my conscience, shielding and harboring her. I truly lacked humanity. Where was my loyalty to God? Hadn't I become one of Satan's accomplices? Even while enjoying so much of God's sustenance, I still bit the hand that feeds me. I was fine with letting the church's work and my brothers' and sisters' life entry suffer, as long as my personal interests were safeguarded. I was so lacking in conscience and humanity! If I continued to fail to repent and practice the truth, God would eventually spurn me and eliminate me.

After that, I read a couple more passages of God's words: **"If God wants to save you, no matter whose services He uses to accomplish it, you should first thank God and accept it from God. You should not direct your gratitude solely toward people, to say nothing of offering up your life to someone in gratitude. This is a grave mistake. The crucial**

thing is that your heart is grateful to God, and you accept it from Him”

(The Word, Vol. 6. On the Pursuit of the Truth I. What It Means to Pursue the Truth (7)). **“Giving help to someone who happens to need it, at an appropriate time and place, is a very normal phenomenon. It is also the responsibility of every member of the human race. This is simply a sort of responsibility and obligation. God gave people these instincts when He created them. ... helping people and being kind to them is near effortless for humans, it is within the scope of human instinct, and something which people are completely capable of accomplishing. There is no need to rank it as highly as kindness. However, many people equate the help of others with kindness, and are always talking about it and constantly repaying it, thinking that if they don’t, they have no conscience. They look down on themselves and despise themselves, even worrying they will be reprimanded by public opinion. Is it necessary to worry about these things? (No.) There are many people who cannot see past this, and are constantly constrained by this issue. This is what it is to not understand the truth principles”** (The Word, Vol. 6. On the Pursuit of the Truth I. What It Means to Pursue the Truth (7)). Yes. God is the Creator; He holds sovereignty over and orchestrates all things. When I was at my weakest and most negative point, it might have seemed like Li Yan was treating me well with her help and fellowship, but, in reality, this was all God’s sovereignty and arrangements, not her care for me. I should have accepted that from God and thanked Him, instead of attributing it to her. Not to mention, Li Yan was a church leader, so it was actually her duty to support brothers and sisters and resolve any issues in their life entry. When Li Yan supported me and fellowshipped God’s words with me, she was just fulfilling her duty. Also, treating brothers and sisters with love, helping and supporting each other is one of God’s demands of His chosen people. I should have accepted Li Yan’s help

from God and shown gratitude to Him. Instead, I fallaciously took it as her care for me and thought she was really a good person. I repeatedly shielded her because of my personal feelings. I clearly knew that she was a false leader, but I didn't stand up to report and expose her. I was just so muddle-headed! I should have considered God's intention, held to the truth principles, and exposed the false leader to safeguard the church's work. This is what a person with conscience and humanity should do. If Li Yan was someone who accepted the truth, when she was pruned and exposed, she would reflect and come to know herself, see her own corruption and deficiencies clearly, repent and achieve transformation. This would also benefit her. If she wasn't someone who accepted the truth, and when pruned, she didn't repent, this would reveal the fact that she didn't pursue the truth and should be dismissed in time. This would be helpful both to the church's work and to others' life entry. I had an absurd understanding of things: I always believed that pruning and exposing people was humiliating and hurting them. I was treating something very positive as negative. As a result, I was continually constrained by this fallacious belief and didn't dare expose Li Yan's issues. I really didn't understand the truth and was truly pathetic. Having realized all that, I felt a sense of relief and stopped avoiding my responsibility.

A few days later, through investigating Li Yan's consistent performance, the church determined that she was a false leader, and she was dismissed. After her dismissal, she didn't self-reflect or come to know herself at all, and even complained that she was wronged. She argued that she'd been a leader for years, had given up her chance to make money out in the world, and endured countless hardships, so she felt the church was treating her unfairly. After that, she became obsessed with wealth, took a job to make money and stopped regularly attending gatherings. After her

dismissal, the church held an election to select a new leader, the disbelievers were cleared out, church life no longer suffered disturbances, and the various items of the church work could proceed smoothly. Seeing all this, I felt much more at ease. I was so happy that I was able to seek the truth in this situation, identify my issues in time and fulfill my duty.

Later on, when I ran into Li Yan, she blew up on me, saying, “I don’t want to see your face! Now everyone’s saying I’m a false leader, and it was you who told them that. I hate you!” It made me pretty upset to hear her say that, but I knew that everything I had reported to the upper leaders was factual. She was a false leader and should be exposed and reported. This was completely in keeping with God’s intention. But why did it hurt so much to hear her say she hated me? Later on, I read a passage of God’s words that gave me an understanding of the root of the problem. God’s words say: **“Although people may eat and drink of God’s words every day and pray-read and contemplate them often, the basic views, principles, and methods underlying how they view people and things, as well as how they comport themselves and act, are still based on traditional culture. Therefore, traditional culture affects people by subjecting them to its manipulation, orchestrations, and control in their day-to-day lives. It is as unshakable and inescapable as their own shadows. Why is this? Because people cannot uncover, dissect, or expose, from the depths of their hearts, the various ideas and views that traditional culture and Satan have instilled in them; they cannot recognize, see through, rebel against, or abandon these things; they cannot view people and things, comport themselves, or act in the way God tells them to, or in the way He teaches and instructs. What sort of predicament do most people still live in because of this? One in which they have a desire deep in their hearts to view people and things, to**

comport themselves and act based on God's words, to not go against God's intentions or the truth, yet, defenselessly and involuntarily, they continue to interact with people, conduct themselves, and handle matters according to the methods Satan teaches. At heart, people long for the truth and wish to possess a tremendous desire for God, to view people and things, to comport themselves and act according to God's words, and to not violate the truth principles, yet things always end up contrary to their wishes. Even after doubling down on their efforts, the result they get is still not what they desire. No matter how people struggle, no matter how much effort they put in, no matter how much they resolve and desire to attain a love for positive things, in the end, the truth they are able to practice and the criteria of the truth they are able to hold to in real life are few and far between. This is what distresses people most, deep in their hearts. What is the reason for this? One reason is none other than that the various ideas and views that traditional culture teaches people still dominate their hearts, and control their words, deeds, ideas, as well as the methods and ways in which they comport themselves and act. Thus, people must undergo a process in order to recognize traditional culture, to dissect and expose it, to discern and see through it, and ultimately, to abandon it forever. It is very important to do this, not something optional. This is because traditional culture already dominates the depths of people's hearts—it even dominates their whole selves. This means that in their lives, people cannot stop themselves from violating the truth in how they conduct themselves, and how they handle matters, and they cannot help but be controlled and influenced by traditional culture, as they have been until today” (The Word, Vol. 6. On the Pursuit of the Truth I. Why Man Must Pursue the Truth). After pondering over God's words I realized that I was living based upon

traditional cultural values and satanic philosophies like “The kindness of a drop of water should be repaid with a gushing spring” and “A kindness received should be gratefully repaid.” I took these ideas as my guiding principles. I believed that I should do my best to protect and repay those who were kind and had done nice things for me regardless of whether they were good or bad people or acted according to the truth principles. Even if they did evil and disrupted and disturbed the church’s work, I should cover for them, otherwise I would be lacking in conscience and humanity. It was because I was constrained by these satanic philosophies and fallacies that, despite clearly seeing that Li Yan didn’t do real work and was a false leader, I delayed exposing and reporting her because she had helped me before. I always wanted to give her another chance and be lenient, to be kind and loving to her. I didn’t consider whether the church’s work and the brothers’ and sisters’ life entry had been harmed. I was indulging a false leader’s evil-doing and standing on Satan’s side, rebelling against and resisting God. I saw that, in essence, these traditional values are all fallacies and devilish words used by Satan to mislead and corrupt people. They are not principles that we should live by. Living by such ideas would only make me increasingly ridiculous and absurd. My thoughts would become more and more muddled, unable to discern good from evil and I’d only ever violate the truth and resist God.

One day, I read another passage of God’s words that says: **“Sometimes, the effects of one’s conscience are constrained and influenced by their feelings, and as a result, their decisions conflict with the truth principles. As such, we can see one fact clearly: The effect of one’s conscience is inferior to the standard of the truth, and sometimes people violate the truth while acting based on their consciences. If you believe in God, but do not live by the truth, and instead act based on**

your conscience, can you do evil and resist God? You will truly be able to do some evil things—it absolutely cannot be said that it is never wrong to act based on one’s conscience. This shows that if one wishes to satisfy God and accord with His intentions, merely acting based on one’s conscience is greatly insufficient. One must act based on the truth in order to fulfill God’s demands” (The Word, Vol. 6. On the Pursuit of the Truth I.

What It Means to Pursue the Truth (2)). Yes. We should all have a conscience, but that’s not the truth and cannot replace it. If we only act and behave according to our conscience instead of following the truth, we’ll be likely to go against the truth and resist God. God asks that we love what He loves and hate what He hates. This is the principle we should apply to approach others. If a brother or sister is a truth-pursuer, then no matter if they’ve shown me kindness, when they encounter problems, I ought to help them with love. If they commit evil acts or if they’re a false leader, evil person or antichrist, then even if they’ve been gracious toward me, I should treat them according to the truth principles and expose and report them. So when Li Yan disrupted and disturbed church work and didn’t accept the truth at all, failing to repent and transform no matter how we fellowshiped with and helped her, I shouldn’t shield her in keeping with my so-called “conscience,” but rather, should expose and report her according to the truth principles. By not doing that, I was just harming brothers and sisters and causing greater losses to the church’s work. Realizing this was enlightening, and I felt I had a path of practice and principles to use in my treatment of others. Later on, Li Yan was so defiant and dissatisfied about being dismissed that not only did she start pursuing wealth and skipping gatherings, but she even spread negativity among the others, continued disturbing church life, and refused to accept fellowship and pruning many times. She should be cleared out according to principle. That time, I didn’t

try to shield her again, instead helping the leaders collect the brothers' and sisters' evaluations of her. With the approval of over 80% of brothers and sisters, Li Yan was cleared out of the church.

Only after experiencing all that did I realize that living by Satan's philosophies only obstructs the practice of truth and can even disrupt and disturb the church's work. Only those who go by God's words in how they behave and view people and things truly have humanity and are able to protect the church's work and align with God's intentions. God's words have rectified my fallacious beliefs and helped me understand the principles of how to treat others.

93. How I Let Go of a Secure Job

By Terry, Japan

I was born into a poor and backward rural family. Even as a child, my father demanded that I study hard, so that in the future, I could get into a good university, have good prospects, and thereby enjoy a prosperous life. But things didn't turn out as planned. I failed the high school entrance exam three years in a row. This made me confused about my future path in life, and I lost confidence. At the time, I was under a lot of mental stress, and felt a lot of pain. That was until the fourth year, when I was finally admitted to a railway engineering school; after graduation, I got a secure job at a Railway Bureau office.

In March of 1999, my wife and I accepted Almighty God's work of the last days. I actively did my duty and participated in church life, and six months later, I was chosen to lead the church. But after becoming a leader, as I spent more time at gatherings and on my duty, conflicts with work arose. To avoid missing gatherings, I had to take leave several times a month. In addition to salary deductions, I also lost my bonus at the end of the month. My boss said unhappily, "You've just started this job, so you need to perform well. If you always ask for leave, you will lose much of your salary, and lose your bonus; isn't this stupid? I've taken good care of you, but if you keep asking for leave, it will be hard to promote you." Later, when I asked for leave again, I felt very awkward. I thought, "My boss here is good to me. If I always take time off and give him a bad impression of me, it will be hard to get promoted. I can't ask for leave this time, or my boss won't be happy with me." But then I thought, as a church leader, if I didn't go to gatherings, I wouldn't know much about the work of the church or the states of my brothers and sisters, so how would I be able to do church

work well? I was very conflicted. I had no way to overcome this, so several times I chose to stay at work. This led to the church's work being delayed, and I felt deeply guilty about it.

Once, my upper-level leader notified me about a co-worker meeting, and I felt conflicted again, so I prayed to God to seek His intention. Then, I read a passage of God's word: **"In every step of work that God does within people, externally it appears to be interactions between people, as if born of human arrangements or from human disturbance. But behind the scenes, every step of work, and everything that happens, is a wager made by Satan before God, and requires people to stand firm in their testimony to God. Take when Job was tried, for example: Behind the scenes, Satan was making a bet with God, and what happened to Job was the deeds of men and the disturbance of men. Behind every step of work that God does in you is Satan's wager with God—behind it all is a battle. ... Everything people do requires them to pay a certain price in their efforts. Without actual hardship, they cannot satisfy God; they do not even come close to satisfying God, and they are just spouting empty slogans! Can these empty slogans satisfy God? When God and Satan do battle in the spiritual realm, how should you satisfy God, and how should you stand firm in your testimony to Him? You should know that everything that happens to you is a great trial and the time when God needs you to bear testimony. Though they may seem unimportant from the outside, when these things happen they show whether or not you love God. If you do, you will be able to stand firm in your testimony to Him, and if you have not put the love of Him into practice, this shows you are not someone who puts the truth into practice, that you are without the truth, and without life, that you are chaff!"** (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. Only Loving God Is Truly

Believing in God). From God's word, I saw that on the surface, the people, events, and things that we encounter every day appear to be human interactions. Behind them, however, is Satan's bet with God, and we need to stand firm in our testimony to God. When Job's trials came to him, he lost all his wealth overnight. Outwardly, it was robbers who had stolen his property, but behind that was the temptation and attack of Satan. When Job stood firm in his testimony to God, Satan withdrew in shame. I had encountered a choice between going to work and attending a gathering, and had felt the constraints of what my boss had said to me. Outwardly, my boss had said that out of concern and care for me—he wanted to promote me. But actually, Satan's disturbance was behind this. Satan was using fame and fortune to lure me into focusing only on working and earning money. This was in order to destroy my normal relationship with God, and keep me far away from God, so that I would have no time to gather or to do my duty. Behind this was Satan's evil intention. Thinking of this, I prayed to God that I would never allow Satan's scheme to succeed. Later, I found the courage to ask my boss for leave and attended the co-worker meeting.

As church work got busier and busier, many things had to be arranged and implemented promptly. If I wanted to do my duty well, I'd have to take more time off. During that time, I was very tormented, and many times I couldn't overcome it, affecting church work as a result. Sometimes I thought I should just quit my job, so that I wouldn't delay the work of the church, but I worried that if I did, there was no way I would have a prosperous life. It was such a good job that I felt reluctant to quit, and it was like there was a constant tug of war in my heart. When I got home, I told my wife that I wanted to quit my job, and I shared my thoughts. I said, "I can't bear to give up this job. I gave years of hard study for this secure job, and the salary is high. If I quit, what will my relatives, friends, and

classmates think of me? My parents will certainly be furious when they find out. Besides, if I quit my job, we will probably be poor for the rest of our lives. But now, I've read so many of Almighty God's words, and I understand God's intentions. The brothers and sisters have chosen me to be the church leader. If I delay church work because of my job, aren't I abandoning my duty?" After listening to me, my wife asked me to pray more to God and make my own choice. That night, I tossed and turned, and couldn't fall asleep, so I prayed to God and asked Him to guide me. One day, I read in Almighty God's word: **"Who can truly and completely expend themselves for Me and offer up their all for My sake? You are all half-hearted; your thoughts go around and around, thinking of home, of the outside world, of food and clothing. Despite the fact that you are here before Me, doing things for Me, deep down you are still thinking of your wife, children, and parents at home. Are all these things your property? Why do you not entrust them into My hands? Do you not have sufficient faith in Me? Or is it that you are afraid I will make inappropriate arrangements for you? Why do you always worry about the family of your flesh and pine for your loved ones? Do I have a certain place in your heart? You still talk about allowing Me to have dominion within you and occupy your entire being—these are all deceptive lies! How many of you are wholeheartedly committed to the church? And who among you think not of yourselves, but are acting for the sake of the kingdom of today? Think very carefully about this"** (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. Utterances of Christ in the Beginning, Chapter 59). God's word exposes that people don't have genuine faith in God, and they don't dare put their future and destiny in God's hands. They always worry and plan for their own flesh, fearing that God won't arrange things properly. Such people do not have a place for God in their hearts. Didn't I also have

no faith in God? I always worried that if I quit my job, financial constraints would leave me no way to live. I had too little faith in God. I didn't have the slightest actual understanding of God's sovereignty over everything. I thought of what the Lord Jesus said: **"Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much better than they?"** (Matthew 6:26). **"Seek you first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added to you"** (Matthew 6:33). I was able to recite these verses, and often used these words to exhort others, but when things actually happened to me, I didn't have any genuine faith in God. As I contemplated God's words, I realized that everyone's future and destiny are in God's hands, and God will always make suitable arrangements. God has promised that He won't mistreat those who sincerely expend for Him. Why didn't I have that trust in God? At this point, I wanted to quit my job immediately and properly do my duty. But when I arrived at the office, my colleagues were talking about their raises and bonuses, and I began to hesitate, unwilling to give up my job. I knew there was a price to pay in order to practice the truth, so I prayed to God, asking Him to guide me in overcoming the flesh, so that I could quit my job and do my duty properly.

Not long after, I experienced something terrifying that made me reflect on my future path in life. One evening, I was working with the train driver, yardmaster, and others to connect train cars. I was standing on the ladder of a moving train, using the walkie-talkie to instruct the conductor in connecting the vehicle. The train was moving very fast. Following the work procedure, I gave the order to slow down when we were the distance of ten cars away from the train car we were going to connect to. But the driver didn't slow down, and I watched helplessly as the train was about to hit the car parked on the track. It was moving so fast that I couldn't jump off—all I

could do was turn quickly from the ladder into the car I was on. I shut my eyes, clung to the side of the car to prevent myself from being flung out, and I called out over and over to Almighty God in my heart. With a loud clang, the train and the car collided. The assistant driver's arm was broken, and he was rushed to the hospital for treatment overnight. I was more scared than hurt—I hadn't received a scratch. After that, the more I thought about it, the more terrified I was by what had happened! Many people in the railway shunting profession had accidents. Some had their arms crushed, and some had their legs crushed. In the face of danger, a secure job couldn't keep people safe or protect their life. Pursuing money can only bring temporary fleshly enjoyment. If I lost God's care and protection for the sake of earning money, while risking my life, what was the point of this secure job? I could no longer let my secure job get in the way of my duty. I decided to live by God's word, entrust everything I had to God, look to Him, and submit to His sovereignty and arrangements. I thought of God's words: **"As someone who is normal, and who pursues the love of God, entry into the kingdom to become one of the people of God is your true future, and a life that is of the utmost value and significance; no one is more blessed than you. Why do I say this? Because those who do not believe in God live for the flesh, and they live for Satan, but today you live for God, and live to follow the will of God. That is why I say your lives are of the utmost significance. Only this group of people, who have been selected by God, are able to live out a life of the utmost significance: No one else on earth is able to live out a life of such value and meaning"** (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. Know God's Newest Work and Follow His Footsteps). God's words were very moving. It's true—those who genuinely love God don't live for fame, fortune, or fleshly enjoyment, they live for God. Only living for God is a worthwhile and meaningful life.

That I had been fortunate enough to hear the Creator's voice, understand some truth, and have the chance to do a duty, was a wonderful thing. I realized that I should stop living in my own little world and pursuing money and material enjoyment. I should submit to God's orchestrations and arrangements, and perform my duty properly as a created being.

After that, I read another passage of God's word: **"How will you pass on what you have seen and experienced to those pitiable, poor, and devout religious believers who hunger and thirst for righteousness and are waiting for you to shepherd them? What kind of people are waiting for you to shepherd them? Can you imagine? Are you aware of the burden on your shoulders, your commission, and your responsibility? Where is your sense of historic mission? How will you adequately serve as a master in the next age? Do you have a strong sense of masterhood? How would you explain the master of all things? Is it really the master of all living creatures and of all physical things in the world? What plans do you have for the progress of the next phase of the work? How many people are waiting for you to be their shepherd? Is your task a heavy one? They are poor, pitiable, blind, and at a loss, wailing in the darkness—where is the way? How they yearn for the light, like a shooting star, to suddenly descend and dispel the forces of darkness that have oppressed man for so many years. Who can know the full extent to which they anxiously hope, and how they pine, day and night, for this? Even on a day when the light flashes past, these deeply suffering people remain imprisoned in a dark dungeon without hope of release; when will they weep no longer? Terrible is the misfortune of these fragile spirits who have never been granted rest, and long have they been kept bound in this state by merciless bonds and frozen history. And who has heard the sound of their wailing? Who has looked**

upon their miserable state? Has it ever occurred to you how grieved and anxious God's heart is? How can He bear to see innocent mankind, whom He created with His own hands, suffering such torment? Human beings, after all, are the victims who have been poisoned. And although man has survived to this day, who would have known that mankind has long been poisoned by the evil one? Have you forgotten that you are one of the victims? Are you not willing to strive, out of your love for God, to save these survivors? Are you not willing to devote all of your energy to repaying God, who loves mankind like His own flesh and blood? When all is said and done, how would you interpret being used by God to live your extraordinary life? Do you really have the resolve and confidence to live the meaningful life of a pious, God-serving person?" (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. How Should You Attend to Your Future Mission?).

From God's word, I felt His love and concern for humankind, as well as His urgent intention to save people. Now, we are in the last days, and disasters are becoming greater. God expresses the truth and does the work of judgment and chastisement, to save people from the power of Satan. Today, I have been fortunate to hear the voice of God and accept His salvation, which is God's grace. But many who yearn for God's appearance have not welcomed the Lord, are still misled and controlled by antichrist pastors and elders in the religious world, and have no way to hear God's voice. If everyone was as selfish as me, if they only cared about fleshly comfort, and didn't preach the gospel and testify to God, then when would those who yearn and wait for God's appearance come to welcome the Lord? After contemplating God's intention, I understood what I should choose and pursue. So, I made up my mind to let go of my work and properly do my duty to spread the gospel. Just when I wanted to resign, however, the assistant station director suddenly came to see me, to teach me about how to

give gifts and about who could help me get promoted. He showed great concern and care for me. I knew that not everyone had the chance to be promoted, and that my wages would go up a lot. After some discussion, my determination to let go of work began to waver again.

Not long after that, I experienced something else terrifying that completely changed my thinking. One day, on the day shift, a freight train needed to be disconnected and marshaled after entering the station. After that was done, I was responsible for putting the chocks under the wheels. After the lunch break, before the train started moving, I forgot to remove them. The driver started the train, and the chocks were dragged along the track by the wheels. He noticed something was wrong and stopped the train in time, just as it was about to pass the switch, avoiding a derailment or even a rollover. That day, without God's protection, if the train had derailed or rolled over, the consequences would have been unimaginable. I was frightened, and I couldn't help but reflect on myself and ask why this happened. I realized, as a church leader, I knew my job had become a hindrance to my duty, which seriously affected the work of the church. Yet I was greedy for money and fleshly pleasure, never willing to give them up, and I frequently deceived God by making resolutions before Him and then breaking those resolutions. I thought of God's words: **"You have received endless grace from Me, and you have seen endless mysteries from heaven; I have even shown you the flames of heaven, but I have not had the heart to burn you. Nevertheless, how much have you given Me in return? How much are you willing to give to Me?"** (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. You Are All So Base in Character!). Outwardly, what happened wasn't a good thing, but I clearly understood that this was God's love, as well as His reminder to me. God has expressed so much truth, and has explained people's outcomes and destinations as clear as day. He only

wants us to understand His urgent intention, properly pursue the truth and perform the duties of a created being, and gain His salvation. But I was stubborn. I always thought I could survive and live a good life by relying on my secure job, so I was unwilling to give it up, follow God, and do my duty. These two terrifying incidents completely awakened me. In the face of disaster, no amount of money could save my life. I recalled that the Lord Jesus said: **“Whoever he be of you that forsakes not all that he has, he cannot be My disciple”** (Luke 14:33). Only now did I truly understand the meaning of the Lord Jesus’ words. When we cherish money and material enjoyment, these things occupy our hearts, and it becomes impossible for us to truly love and follow God, expend for God, and do our duties as created beings. Such people still crave the flesh and the world, and are unworthy to be God’s followers. I didn’t want to rebel against or disappoint God anymore. I had to change my view of things, follow God wholeheartedly, expend for Him, and repay His love. So, I told my boss that I wanted to resign and went through the procedures to terminate the labor contract. At that moment, I was very relaxed. I felt like a bird flying out of a cage. I didn’t have to worry about asking for leave anymore, and I didn’t need to suffer because church work was delayed due to my job. I was very happy to have made such a choice.

My father was very angry when he heard that I quit. He came to me and said, “I worked hard to raise you. I borrowed money for your schooling. You finally got a secure job, and now you don’t want it? What are you thinking? A Railway Bureau job is a great thing to have. Believe in God if you want, but how can you quit your job? Without your job, how will you survive in the future?” Seeing my father’s angry expression made me sad. I remembered how my parents had pinched and scraped for me to study, in the hope that I would find a good job, escape poverty, and live an

outstanding life. I also wanted to bring my parents from the countryside to the city to live in a high-rise building and enjoy a prosperous life. But I had chosen the path of belief in God and no longer pursued money and material enjoyment; I couldn't give them that kind of life, and I felt indebted to them. Faced with my father's words, I didn't know how to answer. Tears welled up in my eyes, and I didn't dare look at him. But I was clear in my heart that I had made the right choice, because I knew the Savior has appeared and is doing His work in the last days. He expresses the truth to save us from this dark and evil world, and this is the only way to be saved and enter the kingdom of heaven. It is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. How could I give it up because I craved fleshly comfort? How could I let work entanglements stop me from pursuing the truth and doing the duty of a created being? In pain, I silently prayed to God, and asked Him to protect my heart from being disturbed. I thought of God's words: **"God created this world and brought man, a living being unto which He bestowed life, into it. Next, man came to have parents and kin, and was no longer alone. Ever since man first laid eyes on this material world, he was destined to exist within the ordination of God. The breath of life from God supports each and every living being throughout growth into adulthood. During this process, no one feels that man is growing up under the care of God; rather, they believe that man is doing so under the loving care of his parents, and that it is his own life instinct that directs his growing up. This is because man knows not who bestowed his life, or from whence it came, much less the way in which the instinct of life creates miracles. He knows only that food is the basis on which his life continues, that perseverance is the source of his existence, and that the beliefs in his mind are the capital upon which his survival depends. Of God's grace and provision, man is utterly oblivious, and**

thus does he fritter away the life bestowed upon him by God.... Not a single one of this humanity that God cares for day and night takes it upon themselves to worship Him. God only continues to work on man, for whom He holds out no expectations, as He has planned. He does so in the hope that one day, man will awaken from his dream and suddenly realize the value and meaning of life, the price God paid for all that He has given him, and the eager solicitude with which God waits for man to turn back to Him” (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. God Is the Source of Man’s Life). **“You must suffer hardship for the truth, you must give yourself to the truth, you must endure humiliation for the truth, and to gain more of the truth you must undergo more suffering. This is what you should do. You must not throw away the truth for the sake of a peaceful family life, and you must not lose your life’s dignity and integrity for the sake of momentary enjoyment. You should pursue all that is beautiful and good, and you should pursue a path in life that is more meaningful. If you lead such a vulgar life, and do not pursue any objectives, do you not waste your life? What can you gain from such a life? You should forsake all enjoyments of the flesh for the sake of one truth, and should not throw away all truths for the sake of a little enjoyment. People like this have no integrity or dignity; there is no meaning to their existence!”** (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. The Experiences of Peter: His Knowledge of Chastisement and Judgment). God’s words enlightened me. I thought it was my parents who had raised me, and who had scraped and saved so I could finish studying, so if I didn’t listen to them and gave up my job for my duty, I would be unworthy of them. But this opinion was ridiculous. God is the source of human life, and all of our lives come from Him. Everything we have is His supply and blessing. Without God, we would have none of this. That my parents raised me to adulthood

was God's sovereignty and arrangement. I should be grateful to God and repay His love. To my parents, I should show normal filial respect and care. At the same time, I should share the gospel with them and let them know the meaning of faith in God. If they didn't believe, I couldn't give up my duty under their constraints. I am a created being, and doing my duty is perfectly natural and justified. If I couldn't fulfill my duty, even if I had a stable job and enjoyed a good material life with my family, it wouldn't have any value or meaning. These temporary pleasures couldn't allow me to understand the truth and gain life. Moreover, to God, I would be rebelling against Him, and I wouldn't gain His approval. To gain the truth, I had to suffer and painfully forsake the things I loved. Only in this way could I live with integrity and dignity, and only then could I gain God's approval. The more I thought about it, the stronger I felt. So, I again testified to my father about God's appearance and work, and told him that without belief in God, all pursuits are empty and have no value or meaning. Now, the Savior has come to express the truth to save people; only by believing in God, pursuing the truth, casting off sin, and truly repenting to God can people survive the disasters and enter His kingdom. All those who pursue the world, no matter how rich their material life, will ultimately fall into the disasters and be punished. But no matter what I said, my father still didn't agree with my resignation, and wanted to make me return to work. Finally, seeing I was unmoved, he left in anger.

Later, my father asked my relatives to come to persuade me. They all said a position in the Railway Bureau was a secure job, and that it was not easy for many people to get such a job through the back door with gifts and money. They said that by resigning I didn't know what was good for me, that I was a fool for believing in God, and that my parents had raised me in vain. When I heard my relatives' accusations, I knew Satan was using them

to attack me and hinder me from forsaking and expending for God. I thought of the words of Almighty God: **“You must possess My courage within you, and you must have principles when it comes to facing relatives who do not believe. For My sake, however, you also must not yield to any dark forces. Rely on My wisdom to walk the perfect way; do not allow any of Satan’s conspiracies to take hold. Put all your efforts into placing your heart before Me, and I shall comfort you and bring you peace and happiness”** (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God.

Utterances of Christ in the Beginning, Chapter 10). After contemplating God’s words, I felt confident, and I found the courage to say to my relatives, “Today, people especially worship money, fame, and status. For these things, people scramble, intrigue, fight each other, and husbands and wives even cheat and betray each other. Everyone lives like this, so even if they find good and secure jobs and want for nothing in their lives, is it really possible to feel happy? Almighty God says: **‘All manner of disasters will befall, one after another; all nations and places will experience calamities: Plague, famine, flood, drought, and earthquakes are everywhere. These disasters are not just happening in one or two places, nor will they be over within a day or two; rather, instead they will expand across a greater and greater area, and become more and more severe. During this time, all manner of insect plagues will arise one after another, and the phenomenon of cannibalism will occur everywhere. This is My judgment upon all nations and peoples’** (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. Utterances of Christ in the Beginning, Chapter 65). Now, the disasters are becoming greater. Only by following Almighty God will He keep us from the disasters. My belief in God and spreading the gospel is more important than my work. Making this choice isn’t a foolish belief, like you think it is. When Noah preached the gospel, people said he was a lunatic, but when the

flood came, out of the entire human race, only Noah's family of eight survived. Noah wasn't crazy or stupid—he was wise and blessed by God. In the last days, the evil and corruption of humankind, and their resistance to God, has reached such a point that He will destroy this human race that is corrupt to the utmost. We can only receive God's protection and can only survive by believing in and worshiping Him. I am telling you this wonderful news today in the hope that you will also receive Almighty God's salvation in the last days. Don't try to persuade me, because I've already decided. I will follow Almighty God for the rest of my life." After I said this, my aunt, who believed in the Lord, said, "Thank God! You have strong faith in God, and choosing to preach God's gospel is pleasing to God." She said to the others, "The path he chose today is the right path. Being rich doesn't matter. What matters is life. We should respect his choice." After that, the others said nothing. I was very happy at that moment. When I stood my ground and chose to satisfy God, there was nothing my relatives could do but withdraw in shame. Since then, I have no longer been constrained by the people, events, and things around me, and I can do my duty full-time.

Later, seeing that many people accept Almighty God's work of the last days, I've felt an indescribable joy in my heart. Bringing those who sincerely long for God back into His house is a very meaningful thing, and the most comforting thing for God. Choosing to put down my secure job and take the path of belief in God is the wisest choice I have ever made in my life. Being able to expend and dedicate my life to preaching the gospel and testifying to God is more valuable and meaningful than anything else I could do!

94. It Is More Blessed to Give Than to Receive

By Harry, Spain

A few years ago, the church leaders arranged for me to make videos. They also said that there was a shortage of people making videos at the time, so they'd be giving me primary responsibility for this work. When I heard this, I was overjoyed, and thought to myself, "Seems like the leaders have a pretty high opinion of me. If I do this video work well, the brothers and sisters are certain to think well of me too." So, I agreed readily. After a while, because I made quite a few videos, the brothers and sisters all looked up to me. I'd often be very happy that I was able to do this duty, and I felt as if I was a rare talent within the church. Although I was pretty busy, had to stay up really late every day, and the duty itself was pretty boring, I felt happy, and not weary at all.

A little later, the leaders arranged for Brother Liu Rui to come learn video production techniques with me. I saw that he had a keen mind and that he was a quick learner, and I also heard Brother Zhao Cheng who was with us at the gathering say that Liu Rui had good caliber, which made me feel somewhat uncomfortable, and think to myself, "Liu Rui is such a quick learner. If he surpasses me, won't he outshine me? If he becomes more skilled than me, and everyone praises him, where would that leave me to stand? I'll have to keep some of my tricks up my sleeve, I can't teach him everything I know, or else the 'student' will starve the 'master.'" To keep Liu Rui from learning too quickly, I started off by just showing him how I made the videos, but I held back on telling him about the details and essentials of the process. A few days later, I had him watch a few relevant tutorials and then got him to fumble about practicing by himself. I told him that this was how I'd learned, and that he'd only be able to make videos if

he practiced well. He followed my instructions and spent his days fumbling about practicing by himself. In reality, I'd never intended to teach him how to make videos. I even thought to myself, "I'm not going to teach you any techniques, you can just watch some tutorials by yourself. If you aren't able to learn anything and end up being unable to do anything, then the leaders will, of course, send you away."

Some time passed, and Liu Rui still couldn't make videos by himself because he was making such slow progress, and he began to feel pretty negative. When I saw this, I felt secretly happy, and thought to myself, "It's a good thing that you're unable to learn anything. Once the leaders see this, they'll arrange for you to do some other duty, this way I won't have to worry about anyone surpassing me." But then I thought, "Liu Rui has been negative for a few days now. If I don't help him, will he say that I don't have good humanity and that I'm lacking in compassion?" To keep him from thinking I was intentionally holding him back and not teaching him any techniques, I came to him, pretending to comfort him, saying, "Brother, don't worry, take your time. Learning these techniques takes a while. When I started out, I had to watch a lot of tutorial videos too. There are still lots of videos that need to be made. With more practice, you'll definitely be able to make videos by yourself." Outwardly, it seemed like I cared for Liu Rui, but behind his back, I talked about all his little flaws in front of Zhao Cheng, making Zhao Cheng develop an antipathy toward him and join me in excluding and isolating him. I thought that so long as we all just ignored Liu Rui, he wouldn't be able to stay on and that he'd ask to leave of his own volition, and in that way, I wouldn't have to do a duty with him. But Liu Rui never said he wanted to leave, and my attitude toward him became worse and worse. Most of the time, I didn't even want to say a single thing to him. Later on, Zhao Cheng saw that my problems were pretty serious, so

he fellowshiped with me and asked me to cooperate harmoniously with Liu Rui. I also felt that I'd gone a little too far and I felt kind of guilty. I felt like I shouldn't be treating Liu Rui the way I was, but I was still afraid of him surpassing me if he learned some skills, so I remained unwilling to teach him. Later on, because Liu Rui was still unable to make videos by himself, the leaders arranged for him to go off and do another duty. Once Liu Rui had left, I didn't feel as happy as I thought I would. Instead, I felt uncomfortable in a way I couldn't quite describe. I couldn't feel the presence of God, my heart was filled with darkness, and I felt like I was living in a daze. I had no good ideas as I was making videos and I found myself stumped by even straightforward problems, leading to videos often having to be reworked. I found myself feeling stifled and pained, and that I wasn't as driven to do my duty as I had been before. Later on, I sought and opened up about my state with my brothers and sisters. They said that I placed too much importance on reputation and status, that I had an arrogant disposition, and that I didn't have good humanity. It was pretty discomfoting to hear this, but I finally started to reflect on myself. I'd really gone overboard with how I'd treated Liu Rui and this wasn't something a person who believed in God would have done. I was completely lacking in humanity!

At this time, I began reading God's word that exposes this aspect of people's states. One day, I read God's word saying: **"Some people always fear that others are better than they are or above them, that other people will be recognized while they get overlooked, and this leads them to attack and exclude others. Is this not a case of being envious of people with talent? Is that not selfish and despicable? What kind of disposition is this? It is maliciousness! Those who only think about their own interests, who only satisfy their own selfish desires, without**

thinking about others or considering the interests of God's house, have a bad disposition, and God has no love for them" (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. Freedom and Liberation Can Be Gained Only by Casting Off One's Corrupt Disposition). **"Every one of you has risen to the pinnacle of the multitudes; you have ascended to be the ancestors of the masses. You are extremely arbitrary, and you run amok among all of the maggots, seeking a place of ease and attempting to devour the maggots that are smaller than you. You are malicious and sinister in your hearts, surpassing even the ghosts that have sunk to the bottom of the sea. You reside in the bottom of the dung, disturbing the maggots from top to bottom until they have no peace, fighting each other for a while and then calming down. You do not know your place, yet still you battle with each other in the dung. What can you gain from such struggle? If you truly had hearts of fear for Me, how could you fight with each other behind My back? No matter how high your status, are you not still a stinking little worm in the dung? Will you be able to sprout wings and become a dove in the sky?"** (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. When Falling Leaves Return to Their Roots, You Will Regret All the Evil You Have Done). Each and every one of God's words of judgment pierced my heart, and especially when I read God's word saying **"being envious of people with talent"** **"arbitrary"** and **"malicious and sinister in your hearts,"** I really felt like God was before me, exposing me. I'd seen that Liu Rui had a keen mind and that he was a quick learner and I'd worried that he'd surpass me and then take my place once he'd learned all these skills. In order to protect my status, I not only refused to teach him, but I also deliberately stifled him, kept him from learning, and tried to rope in Zhao Cheng to exclude and isolate him as well, all so that he'd feel the duty was too difficult and want to leave. I had treated my brother as an enemy to protect my reputation and

status. Seeing my exclusion causing my brother to become negative to the point of not wanting to learn anymore, not only did I not reflect on myself, but I felt happy instead. I even hoped that he would leave soon. Zhao Cheng pointed out my problem to me, but because I was so intransigent and placed so much importance on my own status, I never truly reflected on myself. As a result, Liu Rui remained unable to make videos by himself and got transferred to another duty. I was truly selfish, despicable and malicious!

Later on, I read God's word that says: **"Antichrists expropriate everything from the house of God and the property of the church, and treat them as their personal property, all of which is to be managed by them, and they do not permit anyone else to intervene in this. The only things they think about when doing the work of the church are their own interests, their own status, and their own pride. They do not allow anyone to harm their interests, much less do they allow anyone of caliber or anyone who is able to speak of their experiential testimony to threaten their reputation and status. ... When someone distinguishes themselves with a little work, or when someone is able to speak of true experiential testimony, and God's chosen people receive benefits, edification, and support from it, and it earns great praise from everyone, envy and hate grows in the hearts of the antichrists, and they try to exclude and suppress that person. They do not, under any circumstances, allow such people to undertake any work, in order to prevent them from threatening their status. ... the antichrists think to themselves, 'There's no way I'm going to put up with this. You want to have a role in my domain, to compete with me. That's impossible; don't even think about it. You're more educated than me, more articulate than me, more popular than me, and you pursue the truth with greater diligence than I do. If I were to cooperate with you and you stole my**

thunder, what would I do then?’ Do they consider the interests of the house of God? No” (The Word, Vol. 4. Exposing Antichrists. Item Eight: They Would Have

Others Submit Only to Them, Not the Truth or God (Part One)). God’s word exposes that in order to gain status and make others look up to them, antichrists use any means at their disposal to oppress and exclude anybody capable of threatening their status, and that they have no consideration whatsoever for the work of the church. I saw that my actions were the actions of an antichrist and that I had been doing my duty solely to gain the admiration of others. I was afraid that Liu Rui would surpass me and take my place once he’d learned some skills, so I didn’t teach him, and judged and isolated him behind his back. I viewed this church work as my own enterprise. I wanted to do as I pleased, act wantonly, and use any means I had at my disposal to attack and exclude anybody who might constitute a threat to my status. I wasn’t considering the interests of the church at all. My desire for status really went to my head, and I lost all sense of reason! Now is a crucial time for spreading the gospel of the kingdom. We need to make more videos to testify to God’s appearance and work. If I’d taught Liu Rui everything I knew, he would have been able to bring his talents to the fore and if we had been able to work together harmoniously, the speed at which we made videos would have increased, and we would have been able to contribute our humble efforts to spreading the gospel of the kingdom, thus fulfilling our responsibilities and duties. But I’d just thought about how another partner would pose a threat to my status. I only cared about my own reputation and status, and I didn’t consider God’s intention or consider how the work of the church would be impacted whatsoever, nor did I consider my brother’s feelings. I preferred to delay duties rather than allow my status to be affected. I was truly selfish and lacking in humanity! I was willing to do whatever it took for the sake of my reputation and status, even at the cost

of sacrificing the interests of the church. I was walking the path of an antichrist!

One day, during my spiritual devotion, I read more of God's word: **"God loathes nothing more than when people pursue status, because the pursuit of status is a satanic disposition, it is a wrong path, it is born of the corruption of Satan, it is something condemned by God, and it is the very thing that God judges and purifies. God loathes nothing more than when people pursue status, and yet you still mulishly compete for status, you unfailingly cherish and protect it, always trying to take it for yourself. And in nature, is all of this not antagonistic to God? Status is not ordained for people by God; God provides people with the truth, the way, and the life, and ultimately makes them become an acceptable created being, a small and insignificant created being—not someone who has status and prestige and is revered by thousands of people. And so, no matter what perspective it is viewed from, the pursuit of status is a dead end. No matter how reasonable your excuse for pursuing status is, this path is still the wrong one, and is not approved of by God. No matter how hard you try or how great the price you pay, if you desire status, God will not give it to you; if it's not given by God, you will fail in fighting to obtain it, and if you keep fighting there will only be one outcome: You will be revealed and eliminated, and you will meet with a dead end"** (The Word, Vol. 4. Exposing Antichrists. Item Nine (Part Three)). Reading God's severe words, I realized that God's righteous disposition brooks no offense, and when I thought about what I'd done, I was filled with fear. My pursuit of status was hated and detested by God, and it was a path leading to certain death! Without the church giving me a chance to practice making videos and the guidance of God, how would I have learned all these skills? The church had

arranged for me to teach Liu Rui and I should have taught him everything I knew and cooperated with him to do the duty well. Only this would have accorded with God's intention. God had hoped that I would have been able to pursue the truth in the course of my duty, that I would have been able to cast off my corrupt dispositions, and that I would have been able to fulfill the duty I should do to satisfy God. Only this was the right path and what I should have pursued in my faith in God. But I had not been pursuing the truth in my faith. Instead, I had been relying on satanic poisons like "There can only be one alpha male" and "Once a student knows everything the master knows, the master will lose his livelihood" to live my life. I viewed the skills I had as my private property, and I was unwilling to teach them to other brothers and sisters out of the fear that they would surpass me and that I would lose my status and others' admiration as a result. I excluded and stifled others to stabilize my status. I was truly without conscience and reason! I thought about all the antichrists who had been expelled from the church. They all wanted sole power within the church, and to protect their status, they were willing to attack and exclude anyone they saw as a threat to their status. No matter how much they harmed others or how badly the church's work was disturbed and damaged, they didn't care even slightly. In the end, because of all the evils they committed, they were eliminated by God. I saw that the disposition my actions were revealing was no different from an antichrist's; it was selfish and malicious, and hated and detested by God. This thought made me pretty scared, and I found myself filled with guilt and remorse. I fell before God and prayed, "Oh God, I have erred; I was blinded by status, lost all reason, and harmed my brother. God, I should not have done this, and I am willing to repent. If I do this again, please discipline me."

Later on, the leaders arranged for two more brothers to come and cooperate with me. They asked me to teach them and said that this would make the video work progress faster and that it would help me by allowing me to share some of my workload. Hearing this, I thought to myself, “So they’re arranging for two people to come and learn at the same time; if I teach them everything I know, will they surpass me before long?” I was kind of worried and unwilling, but to save face, I had no choice but to agree to teach the two brothers. But while actually teaching them, I was still unwilling to share the key points and essentials that I had managed to master. I kept wanting to hold things back and only teach them basic techniques. But when I thought about doing it in this way, I felt very uneasy, and that what I was doing was selfish, despicable, and lacking in humanity. Later on, I read God’s word: **“Nonbelievers have a certain kind of corrupt disposition. When they teach other people a piece of professional knowledge or a skill, they think, ‘Once a student knows everything the master knows, the master will lose his livelihood. If I teach everything I know to others, then no one will look up to me or admire me anymore and I will have lost all my status as a teacher. This will not do. I can’t teach them everything I know, I must hold something back. I’ll teach them only eighty percent of what I know and keep the rest up my sleeve; this is the only way to show that my skills are superior to those of others.’ What sort of disposition is this? It is deceitfulness. When teaching others, assisting them, or sharing with them something you studied, what attitude should you take? (I should spare no effort and hold nothing back.) How does one hold nothing back? If you say, ‘I don’t hold anything back when it comes to the things that I’ve learned, and I have no problem telling all of you about them. I am of a higher caliber than you anyway, and I can still comprehend more**

elevated things’—that is still holding back and it is quite calculating. Or if you say, ‘I’ll teach you all the basic things I’ve learned, it’s no big deal. I still have higher knowledge, and even if you learn all of this, you still won’t be as advanced as me’—that’s still holding something back. If a person is too selfish, they will be without God’s blessing. People should learn to be considerate of God’s intentions. You must contribute the most important and essential things that you have grasped to God’s house, so that God’s chosen ones can learn them and master them—that is the only way to attain God’s blessing, and He will bestow upon you even more things. As it is said, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’ Devote all of your talents and gifts to God, displaying them in the performance of your duty so that everyone can benefit, and achieve results in their duties. If you contribute your gifts and talents in their entirety, they will be beneficial to all those who do that duty, and to the work of the church. Do not just tell everyone some simple things and then think that you’ve done quite well or that you have not held anything back—this will not do. You only teach a few theories or things that people can understand literally, but the essence and important points are beyond the grasp of a novice. You only give an overview, without elaborating or going into detail, all the while still thinking to yourself, ‘Well, anyway, I’ve told you, and I haven’t intentionally held anything back. If you don’t understand, it’s because your caliber is too poor, so don’t blame me. We’ll just have to see how God leads you now.’ Such deliberation contains deceit, does it not? Is it not selfish and despicable? Why can’t you teach people everything in your heart and everything you understand? Why do you withhold knowledge instead? This is a problem with your intentions and your disposition. When most people are first introduced to some specific aspect of professional

knowledge, they can only comprehend its literal meaning; it takes a period of practice before the main points and essence can be grasped. If you have already mastered these finer points, you should tell them to others directly; do not make them take such a roundabout path and spend so much time groping around. This is your responsibility; it is what you should do. You will only not be withholding anything, and not be selfish, if you tell them what you believe to be the main points and essence. When you teach skills to others, communicate with them about your profession, or fellowship about life entry, if you cannot resolve the selfish and despicable aspects of your corrupt dispositions, you won't be able to perform your duties well, in which case, you are not someone who possesses humanity, or conscience and reason, or who practices the truth. You must seek the truth to resolve your corrupt dispositions, and reach the point where you are devoid of selfish motives, and only consider God's intentions. In this way, you will have the truth reality. It is too tiring if people do not pursue the truth and live by satanic dispositions like the nonbelievers. Competition is rife among nonbelievers. Mastering the essence of a skill or a profession is no simple matter, and once someone else finds out about it, and masters it themselves, your livelihood will be at risk. In order to protect that livelihood, people are driven to act in this way—they must be cautious at all times. What they've mastered is their most valuable currency, it's their livelihood, their capital, their lifeblood, and they mustn't let anyone else in on it. But you believe in God—if you think this way and act this way in God's house, there is nothing to distinguish you from a nonbeliever. If you do not accept the truth at all, and continue to live according to satanic philosophies, then you are not someone who truly believes in God. If you always have selfish motives and are petty-

minded while performing your duty, you will not receive God's blessing" (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. Part Three). Having read God's word, I realized that the satanic philosophy of "Once a student knows everything the master knows, the master will lose his livelihood" is a rule that nonbelievers live by, and that it is a selfish and despicable way of acting. When brothers and sisters perform a duty together, they rely on one another's strengths to make up for their own weaknesses, and they cooperate to perform a duty well. As a person who believes in God, I should conduct myself and act in accordance with God's word. I couldn't rely on my corrupt disposition to do as I wanted. I had to allow the brothers and sisters to study properly, teach them the keys and essentials of making videos, and not hold anything back. I had to keep them from taking detours in their learning so that they'd be able to get started on video production sooner. These were the responsibilities and duties I was supposed to fulfill. This was God's intention. Realizing these things, when it came time to teach the brothers again, I taught them all the keys and essentials I had come to master. After some time, they began to make some progress in video production. Because there were two more people to help, the efficiency of our duty also increased. Furthermore, in the process of teaching the brothers, my own skills were consolidated and strengthened. I learned that only by letting go of my own selfish and despicable intention, practicing the truth, thinking about how to do my duty well, and considering how to practice in a way that would benefit the work of the church and how to act in a way that would help my brothers and sisters, did I feel a sense of ease and peace.

Looking back, I realize I was living by satanic poisons, and that I was selfish and malicious. My actions and conduct weren't beneficial to my brothers and sisters, or to the work of the church, rather, they were

disturbing and destructive, and were really hurting God's heart. It was God's word that allowed me to gain some understanding of how malicious and selfish I was, and to understand what normal humanity is, what people who believe in God should pursue, how they should conduct themselves, and at the same time, it gave me some real understanding of God's righteous disposition. While I was intransigent, rebellious, and living in my corrupt disposition, God hid His face from me, but when I repented and confessed to God and practiced in accordance with His word, He began to work on me again and He used His word to enlighten and illuminate me to know myself. I came to realize just how real and practical God's salvation is!

95. I'll No Longer Delimit God

By Tara, Taiwan

I practiced faith in the Lord Jesus with my mother from an early age and enjoyed His abundant grace and blessings. This gave me a deep sense of the Lord Jesus' profound mercy and love for humanity. Growing up in the Lord's grace, I was used to reaching out to ask Him for grace. Whenever I encountered problems, I'd pray to the Lord and when I'd sinned, I'd come before Him to confess. I believed that because the Lord is merciful and loving, He would always pardon my sins.

One day in May of 2019, I met Sisters Diana and Vanessa on Facebook. We participated in a Bible study group together and I found Vanessa's fellowship on the Bible was very insightful. One time, during a gathering, Vanessa said, "The Lord said that He would come again in the last days, so how can we welcome Him? The Lord Jesus said: **'My sheep hear My voice'** (John 10:27). **'Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hears My voice, and opens the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me'** (Revelation 3:20). Also, **'He that has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches'** (Revelation 2:7). From these passages, we can see that when the Lord comes in the last days, He will express His words. The key to welcoming the Lord is to listen closely to God's voice, and those who can welcome the Lord by hearing His voice are wise virgins." I was so surprised when I heard Vanessa's fellowship. I'd never heard such insightful words. She'd identified the key to welcoming the Lord. I had never realized this before. After that, Vanessa showed us a really lively hymn video. At the end of the video, I saw it said, "The Church of Almighty God," and I became curious. When the gathering concluded, I hurried online to search. I saw a lot of negative information and so I

hurriedly contacted Diana to learn more. Diana said that welcoming the Lord is a really big deal and encouraged me not to be swayed by hearsay, and suggested that I should first put aside my concerns and humbly seek to see if this was the true way. A few days later, Diana invited me to attend a gathering. I felt so conflicted: Should I go or not? Vanessa's fellowship on the Bible really was insightful and I wanted to hear more, but I also worried that what she was preaching wasn't the true way. In the midst of my hesitancy, I prayed to the Lord, asking for His guidance. After that, I attended the gathering.

During the gathering, Vanessa excitedly said to me, "The Lord Jesus has already returned, He is the incarnate Almighty God. Almighty God has concluded the Age of Grace and established the Age of Kingdom, has expressed millions of words and, on the foundation of the Lord Jesus' work of redemption, He's performing the work of judgment starting from the house of God, to thoroughly purify and save mankind. The words Almighty God expresses are all the truth and they reveal the mystery of God's incarnation, the three stages of His work, and the inside story of the Bible. His words also tell of the source of humanity's sinfulness, how Satan corrupts mankind, how God saves mankind in progressive stages, and of the meaning of God's work of judgment in the last days. Almighty God also has shown us the ways by which believers can attain salvation. For instance, He details how to experience the judgment of His words to cast off our corrupt disposition, how to practice the truth and be honest people, how to fear Him and shun evil, how to become people who follow His will, and so on." She also said that Almighty God's words and work fulfilled the Lord Jesus' prophecy: **"I have yet many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. However, when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth: for He shall not speak of Himself; but**

whatever He shall hear, that shall He speak: and He will show you things to come” (John 16:12–13). “He that rejects Me, and accepts not My words, has one that judges him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day” (John 12:48). “For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God” (1 Peter 4:17). I felt what Vanessa had said was illuminating, but I still had many doubts in my heart. So I quietly prayed to God, and I thought of how God said: “Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 5:3). I thought, “God’s return is a big deal, I can’t blindly jump to any conclusions. I should be a humble seeker and continue to listen.”

After that, Vanessa had me read a passage of Almighty God’s words: **“Christ of the last days brings life, and brings the enduring and everlasting way of truth. This truth is the path by which man gains life, and it is the only path by which man shall know God and be approved by God. If you do not seek the way of life provided by Christ of the last days, then you shall never gain the approval of Jesus, and shall never be qualified to enter the gate of the kingdom of heaven, for you are both a puppet and prisoner of history. Those who are controlled by regulations, by words, and shackled by history will never be able to gain life nor gain the perpetual way of life. This is because all they have is turbid water which has been clung to for thousands of years instead of the water of life that flows from the throne. Those who are not supplied with the water of life will forever remain corpses, playthings of Satan, and sons of hell. How, then, can they behold God? If you only try to hold on to the past, only try to keep things as they are by standing still, and do not try to change the status quo and discard history, then will you not always be against God? The steps of God’s work are vast and mighty, like surging waves and rolling thunders—yet**

you sit passively awaiting destruction, clinging to your folly and doing nothing. In this way, how can you be considered someone who follows the footsteps of the Lamb? How can you justify the God that you hold on to as a God who is always new and never old? And how can the words of your yellowed books carry you across into a new age? How can they lead you to seek the steps of God's work? And how can they take you up to heaven? What you hold in your hands are words that can provide but temporary solace, not truths that are capable of giving life. The words of scriptures you read can only enrich your tongue and are not words of philosophy that can help you know human life, much less the paths that can lead you to perfection. Does this discrepancy not give you cause for reflection? Does it not make you realize the mysteries contained within? Are you capable of delivering yourself to heaven to meet God on your own? Without the coming of God, can you take yourself into heaven to enjoy family happiness with God? Are you still dreaming now? I suggest, then, that you stop dreaming and look at who is working now—look to see who is now carrying out the work of saving man during the last days. If you do not, you shall never gain the truth, and shall never gain life” (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God.

Only Christ of the Last Days Can Give Man the Way of Eternal Life). As I read, I started to feel like there was something different about these words and I couldn't help but feel fear of them: These words sounded so stern and piercing—each word and phrase was filled with authority and power. They didn't seem like words that any mere mortal would utter. Only God could speak in this way. But then I also thought, “That's not right, God is merciful and loving—His words are full of solace and tenderness. But these words are so severe, they're like a curse or a condemnation of humankind. Are these really the words of God? Given how full of authority these words are, they

must be the words of God, right? But if Almighty God really is the returned Lord Jesus, He should speak in the same way as Him, full of mercy and love for mankind, and His words should be gentle and considerate. But Almighty God's speech is so severe. Could He really be the returned Lord Jesus?" I felt so confused, so I told Vanessa about my doubts.

Vanessa patiently fellowshipped with me, saying, "We've always believed that God is merciful and loving, that He speaks to us in a gentle and considerate way, and so if His words are severe, they are not the words of God. But have we ever considered whether this idea really conforms with the facts and the truth? Actually, in every age, God has not only spoken considerate and encouraging words, but also severe words that rebuke, judge, and curse people. It's just that we haven't paid attention to this. Let's look at how this is recorded in the Bible. Jehovah God said: **'His watchmen are blind: they are all ignorant, they are all dumb dogs, they cannot bark; sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber. Yes, they are greedy dogs which can never have enough, and they are shepherds that cannot understand: they all look to their own way, every one for his gain, from his quarter'** (Isaiah 56:10–11). And the Lord Jesus said: **'You serpents, you generation of vipers, how can you escape the damnation of hell?'** (Matthew 23:33). **'Give not that which is holy to the dogs, neither cast your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you'** (Matthew 7:6). There are many more verses like this. From these verses, we can see that in the Age of Law and the Age of Grace, God rebuked, condemned, and cursed people. Though His words sounded severe and cut right to the quick, they were all true and all exposed people's essence of resisting and rebelling against God. In reality, no matter if God's words are gentle or severe, they are all expressions of God's disposition. However, if we don't understand God's disposition, we will be

prone to delimit Him as merciful and loving; we'll form certain notions when He speaks severely, thinking that God only speaks in a gentle way and shouldn't speak in such stern tones, or else, such words couldn't be those of God. Basing our determination on whether the words are gentle or stern is wrong and a consequence of our own notions and imaginings. For instance, if we only recognized our parents as being our parents when they spoke gently to us, but didn't recognize them as our parents when they spoke sternly or scolded us for doing something wrong, wouldn't that be silly?" After hearing the sister's fellowship, I felt a lot clearer on this issue. I thought, "That's right, no matter whether our parents speak to us gently or sternly, aren't they always still our parents? Jehovah God and the Lord Jesus have all spoken severely before, so why didn't I notice this previously? I guess it really is wrong to determine whether these are God's words based on if they're gentle or stern." After I'd realized this, I didn't feel as resistant. But whenever I read passages of Almighty God's words that exposed and judged humanity, I'd feel they were piercing, as if I'd been condemned. I kept going back and forth: The Lord Jesus is merciful and loving, so why is Almighty God so stern?

One time during a gathering, I asked Sister Susie my question, "I just can't see Almighty God and the Lord Jesus as the same God—their dispositions are just too different. When I envision the Lord Jesus, I think of how God is merciful and loving, but Almighty God just seems so stern, and much of what He says is exposing and dissecting people. Why are Almighty God and the Lord Jesus so different?" She fellowshipped saying, "People often have this confusion and it's mainly because they don't understand God's disposition. Let's have a look back at God's previous work. Once we have some understanding of God's righteous disposition, this problem will resolve itself. We all know that when God noticed the evildoing of the

people of Sodom and Nineveh, His disposition was enraged and He decided to destroy these two cities. Before destroying them, God sent two angels to Sodom and Lot was the only one that hosted them. The other inhabitants not only didn't welcome the angels, they wanted to kill them. God saw their evildoing and was enraged. After the angels had saved Lot and his family, God rained fire down from the heavens, obliterating all the people, livestock, and plant-life in the city. Now let's look at Nineveh. God also planned to destroy this city and so He sent Jonah to convey His message: **'Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown'** (Jonah 3:4). When the king of Nineveh heard these tidings, he led the people of his city in changing into sackcloth, sitting in ashes, fasting, praying, casting off the evil they espoused, and repenting to God. When God saw this, He withdrew His wrath, and mercifully spared them from destruction. From God's differing attitudes toward Nineveh and Sodom, we can see that God's disposition is real and vivid. He is not only loving and merciful, but also majestic and wrathful. When people sin, God gives them a chance to repent, displaying to them His loving and merciful disposition. When people are stubborn and don't want to repent, when they even obstinately resist God and cry out against Him, God unleashes His rage on them, displaying His righteous and majestic disposition. This allows us to see that God's righteous disposition is not only loving and merciful, but also majestic and wrathful. Both of these aspects are contained in God's inherent disposition. Let's now consider the Age of Grace in which the Lord Jesus did His work. When people sinned and came before the Lord to confess and repent, He would absolve them of their sins and bestow upon them abundant grace. Therefore, many people believe that the Lord's disposition is just loving and merciful and not wrathful and cursing. In reality, these are just people's notions and imaginings. Regarding the Pharisees that condemned and

resisted the Lord and even openly clamored against Him, the Lord Jesus was full of wrath. He condemned and cursed them and pronounced seven woes upon them. He didn't have the slightest bit of mercy for them. From the time of creation until the present, God has always expressed His righteous disposition to humankind. God is loving and merciful, but also majestic, wrathful, cursing, and punishing. Just as Almighty God says: **'The mercy and tolerance of God do indeed exist, but God's holiness and righteousness when He unleashes His wrath also show man the side of God that brooks no offense. When man is fully capable of obeying the commands of God and acts in accordance with God's requirements, God is abundant in His mercy toward man; when man has been filled with corruption, hatred and enmity for Him, God is profoundly angry. To what extent is He profoundly angry? His wrath will last until God no longer sees man's resistance and evil deeds, until they are no longer before His eyes. Only then will God's anger disappear. ... He is tolerant and merciful toward things that are kind and beautiful and good; toward things that are evil, sinful, and wicked, He is profoundly wrathful, such that He is unceasing in His wrath. These are the two principal and most prominent aspects of God's disposition, and, moreover, they have been revealed by God from beginning to end: abundant mercy and profound wrath'** (The Word, Vol. 2. On Knowing God. God's Work, God's Disposition, and God Himself II). Through God's words, we can see that abundant mercy and profound wrath are the two aspects of God's disposition that He continually displays to humankind. These two aspects of His disposition are not contradictory. They are all a part of His inherent disposition. We mustn't delimit God as only being capable of bestowing abundant mercy and not inflicting profound wrath based on the fact we've enjoyed His grace in the past. This kind of understanding is too one-sided."

Upon hearing this, I realized that God is not only loving and merciful, but also majestic, wrathful, and cursing. All these are aspects of God's inherent disposition. It was because I understood too little of God's disposition that I espoused the one-sided belief that God is only merciful and loving. These really were my notions and imaginings and didn't line up with reality. I realized I had to listen to more fellowship to deepen my understanding.

Susie also said that the disposition that God manifests during each age, is based upon the requirements of God's work of salvation, as well as the needs of corrupted humankind. Then we read two passages of Almighty God's words that helped me gain a clearer understanding of the truth in this regard. Almighty God says: **"The work Jesus did was in accordance with the needs of man in that age. His task was to redeem humanity, to forgive them their sins, and so His disposition was wholly one of humility, patience, love, piety, forbearance, mercy, and lovingkindness. He brought to humanity abundant grace and blessings, and all the things that people could possibly enjoy, He gave to them for their enjoyment: peace and happiness, His tolerance and love, His mercy and lovingkindness. At the time, the abundance of things to enjoy that people were faced with—the sense of peace and security within their hearts, the feeling of reassurance within their spirits, and their dependence on Jesus the Savior—was all down to the age in which they lived"** (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. The True Story Behind the Work of the Age of Redemption). **"In His final work of concluding the age, God's disposition is one of chastisement and judgment, in which He reveals all that is unrighteous, in order to publicly judge all peoples, and to perfect those who love Him with a sincere heart. Only a disposition such as this can bring the age to an end. The last days have already arrived. All things in creation will be separated according to their kind,**

and divided into different categories based on their nature. This is the moment when God reveals humanity's outcome and their destination. If people do not undergo chastisement and judgment, then there will be no way of exposing their rebelliousness and unrighteousness. Only through chastisement and judgment can the outcome of all creation be revealed. Man only shows his true colors when he is chastised and judged. Evil shall be put with evil, good with good, and all humanity shall be separated according to their kind. Through chastisement and judgment, the outcome of all creation will be revealed, so that the evil may be punished and the good rewarded, and all people surrender to the dominion of God. All this work must be achieved through righteous chastisement and judgment. Because man's corruption has reached its peak and his rebelliousness become exceedingly severe, only God's righteous disposition, one that is principally compounded of chastisement and judgment and is revealed during the last days, can fully transform and complete man. Only this disposition can expose evil and thus severely punish all the unrighteous. Therefore, a disposition such as this is imbued with the significance of the age, and the revelation and exhibition of His disposition is made manifest for the sake of the work of each new age. It is not that God reveals His disposition arbitrarily and without significance. Supposing that, in revealing the outcome of man during the last days, God were still to bestow upon man infinite compassion and love and continue to be loving toward him, not subjecting man to righteous judgment but rather showing him tolerance, patience, and forgiveness, and pardoning man no matter how grave his sins, without any jot of righteous judgment: when then would all of God's management ever be brought to a close? When would a disposition such as this be able to

lead people into mankind's appropriate destination? Take, for example, a judge who is always loving, a judge with a kindly face and a gentle heart. He loves people irrespective of the crimes they may have committed, and he is loving to and forbearing with them whoever they may be. In that case, when will he ever be able to reach a just verdict? During the last days, only righteous judgment can separate man according to their kind and bring man into a new realm. In this way, the entire age is brought to an end through God's righteous disposition of judgment and chastisement" (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. The Vision of God's Work (3)).

After we read God's words, Susie fellowshiped, saying, "In the Age of Law, Jehovah God expressed Himself with dispositions dominated by curses, burning, and wrath. During that time, people had a profound lack of understanding. They didn't know what sin was, how they should live, or how to worship God, so based on their needs at that time, God issued laws and commandments to guide people in their lives. Those who obeyed God's laws received His mercy, but those that violated the law were punished, and were even scorched by God's heavenly fire or stoned to death. However, toward the end of the Age of Law, people became more and more corrupted and would often sin and violate the law in spite of themselves, and they would all have been put to death under the law if their actions were judged by the law of the time. So, during the Age of Grace, God Himself became flesh to redeem humankind according to their needs, displaying His merciful and loving disposition and bestowing people with abundant grace. He treated them with boundless mercy and love, tolerated and forgave their sins, and ultimately was crucified as a sin offering to redeem all people of their sins. He pardoned them of their sentences by the law and allowed them to keep on living. In the Age of Grace, if God had continued to

express His disposition in the form of curses, burning, and wrath, people's sins would never have been pardoned, people under the law would never have been redeemed, and mankind would've been reduced to nothing and wouldn't be where it is today. So God expressed His merciful and loving disposition in the Age of Grace. As long as people came before Him and accepted His redemption, confessing and repenting, He would pardon them of their sins. In the last days, people have become more and more corrupted. Despite having received the Lord Jesus' redemption and being pardoned of our sins, our sinful nature, such as arrogance, deceitfulness, evil, intransigence, and viciousness, are all still rooted deep within us. Our satanic disposition still hasn't been thoroughly eradicated, and so we still often lie, sin, rebel against, and resist God. We are still not qualified to enter into God's kingdom. To save humankind and completely rid us of sin, God has incarnated once again, is performing the work of judgment and purification through His words on the foundation of the Lord Jesus' work to thoroughly uproot our satanic dispositions, purify us of sin, and allow us to truly submit to and fear God, and ultimately lead us into His kingdom. Due to the necessities of His work, God no longer expresses His merciful and loving disposition, and instead opts to manifest His righteous, majestic, and wrathful disposition to judge and expose man's corrupt dispositions. Only in so doing, can He transform and purify humanity. Though the disposition that God manifests in each age is different, God's essence never changes. God does His work and expresses His disposition in accord with the needs of His work and corrupt humanity, allowing people to better understand and know God, so that they don't delimit Him and His disposition. We shouldn't think that Almighty God and the Lord Jesus are not the same God just because They express different dispositions." Only after hearing Susie's fellowship did I realize that God decides what kind of disposition to

manifest in each age based on the requirements of His work of salvation and the needs of corrupt humanity. In His work of judgment in the last days, Almighty God manifests His righteous and majestic disposition to purify and save mankind—even though the disposition He expresses is different from the Lord Jesus’, it is still manifested to address the needs of corrupt humanity. Almighty God and the Lord Jesus are one and the same God. Susie’s fellowship was very clear and dispelled all of my confusion.

In the next gathering, Vanessa read another passage of Almighty God’s words to me: **“By what means is God’s perfection of man accomplished? It is accomplished by means of His righteous disposition. God’s disposition primarily consists of righteousness, wrath, majesty, judgment, and curse, and He perfects man primarily by means of His judgment. Some people do not understand, and ask why it is that God is only able to make man perfect through judgment and curse. They say, ‘If God were to curse man, wouldn’t man die? If God were to judge man, wouldn’t man be condemned? Then how can he still be made perfect?’ Such are the words of people who do not know the work of God. What God curses is the rebelliousness of man, and what He judges are the sins of man. Although He speaks harshly and relentlessly, He exposes all that is within man, exposing through these stern words that which is substantive within man, yet through such judgment, He gives man a profound knowledge of the substance of the flesh, and thus man submits before God. The flesh of man is of sin and of Satan, it is rebellious, and it is the object of God’s chastisement. Thus, in order to allow man to know himself, the words of God’s judgment must befall him and there must be employed every kind of refinement; only then can God’s work be effective”** (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. Only by Experiencing Painful Trials Can You Know the Loveliness of

God). After reading God's words, Vanessa said in her fellowship, "In the last days, God's work of judgment and purification is the last stage of work in His salvation of mankind and it is the tail end of His 6,000-year management plan. In expressing His righteous and majestic disposition, He is bringing the entire age to a close, and sorting each according to their kind, the good with the good and the evil with the evil. If God only expressed His merciful and loving disposition, always tolerating, forbearing, and forgiving us no matter how many sins we committed, then we would never be rid of our sinfulness, and we would be forever subject to Satan's power and ravages. Also, God's work of salvation would never be completed and good and evil would never be properly distinguished. So, in the last days, God expresses His righteous, majestic, and wrathful disposition in His work, and exposes people's satanic natures with His severe words. Those that love the truth come to know themselves and they accept the judgment and chastisement of God's words, understand God's righteous disposition that tolerates no offense, and thus, develop a God-fearing heart, and shun evil, ultimately achieving dispositional change. As for those that are averse to the truth and reject God's judgment and chastisement, they are revealed and eliminated by God. In this way, all are sorted according to their kind." I realized that, if Almighty God did His judgment work in the last days in the same way that the Lord Jesus did His work of redemption, only showing mercy and love for people and not sternly judging them, He'd be unable to sort each according to their kind, our sinful and God-resisting nature would never be resolved, and we'd never be saved or enter into God's kingdom. So God expressing a disposition characterized by righteousness, majesty, judgment, and chastisement in the last days is so meaningful!

Later on, we read two passages of Almighty God's words, which gave me further understanding of Almighty God's work and the disposition He expresses in the last days. Almighty God says: **"Today God judges you, chastises you, and condemns you, but you must know that the point of your condemnation is for you to know yourself. He condemns, curses, judges, and chastises so that you might know yourself, so that your disposition might change, and, moreover, so that you might know your worth, and see that all of God's actions are righteous and in accordance with His disposition and the requirements of His work, that He works in accordance with His plan for man's salvation, and that He is the righteous God who loves, saves, judges, and chastises man. ... God has not come to kill or destroy, but to judge, curse, chastise, and save"** (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. You Should Put Aside the Blessings of Status and Understand God's Intention to Bring Salvation to Man). **"Though My words may be stern, they are all said for man's salvation, as I am only speaking words and not punishing man's flesh. These words cause man to live in the light, to know that the light exists, to know that the light is precious, and, even more so, to know how beneficial these words are to them, as well as to know that God is salvation. Though I have uttered many words of chastisement and judgment, what they represent has not been done unto you in deed. I have come to do My work and to speak My words, and though My words may be strict, they are spoken in judgment of your corruption and your rebelliousness. The purpose of My doing this remains to save man from Satan's power; I am using My words to save man. My purpose is not to harm man with My words. My words are stern in order to achieve results in My work. Only through such work can man come to know themselves and break away from their rebellious disposition"** (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of

God. You Should Put Aside the Blessings of Status and Understand God's Intention to Bring Salvation to Man). Vanessa fellowshiped, saying, "Through God's words, we can see that in the last days, God uses His words to judge and purify people. No matter how harsh and cutting His words may be, they are all aimed at helping us recognize the truth of our corruption, break free from Satan's dark influence, and receive God's salvation. We all know that God's disposition is righteous and holy, whereas we humans, who have been so deeply corrupted by Satan, pursue evil worldly trends, and fight with and scheme against each other in the pursuit of money and individual profit, without even the slightest semblance of a real person. Even those that believe in the Lord are unable to practice what He requires and often demand grace and blessings from Him. Any contributions they do make are just to enter heaven and gain eternal life, not to love the Lord and satisfy Him. It is all done just to use the Lord to accomplish their despicable aims. Some religious leaders outwardly seem like humble, patient, and enthusiastic servants of God, but in their sermons, they often exalt and testify to themselves to win the admiration and respect of others. When God returned in the flesh and appeared to perform His work, no one welcomed Him, and the religious world partnered with the atheist government to condemn and resist His return, wantonly fabricating rumors to discredit The Church of Almighty God and prevent people from investigating the true way. That is to say, all of humanity has been condemning and resisting God, and rejecting His coming. Just as the Bible says: '**The whole world lies in wickedness**' (1 John 5:19). Corrupted humankind opposes God in every way. They're all of an ilk with Satan and poisonous snakes. When God expresses His severe words to expose the reality of humankind's corruption, only those that love the truth are able to truly recognize their God-resisting and God-betraying satanic nature, and realize that they don't seek to know God

in their faith, and that they only have base intentions like gaining blessings and making deals with God. They clearly see the ugly truth of their deep corruption by Satan, sincerely repent, resolve to act according to God's requests, and finally gain some human likeness. From this, we can see that no matter how harsh and cutting God's words are, they all expose the reality of our corruption, and are all meant to help us revive our numbed spirits, recognize our corrupt essences, fully break free from the fetters of sin, and become purified. God's severe words of exposure and judgment are very beneficial to us coming to know ourselves and being saved!" After hearing Vanessa's fellowship, I finally realized that God has expressed so many severe words in the last days to expose our true selves. This is His salvation, not condemnation. I thought of how I only believed in God to gain blessings and grace, and even delimited God as merciful and loving, and how I didn't want to acknowledge Him when He spoke severely. I was so irrational! From then on, I was able to accept God's severe and judgmental words and I was even more willing to read Almighty God's words. I became sure that Almighty God was the returned Lord Jesus.

After confirming Almighty God's work in the last days to be true, I actively attended gatherings and read Almighty God's words every day. One day, I saw a passage of God's words: **"If people remain stuck in the Age of Grace, then they shall never be rid of their corrupt disposition, let alone know the inherent disposition of God. If people always live in the midst of an abundance of grace, but do not have the way of life that allows them to know God or to satisfy Him, then they will never truly gain Him in their belief in Him. This type of belief is pitiful indeed. When you have finished reading this book, when you have experienced each step of the work of God incarnate in the Age of Kingdom, you will feel that the desires you have had for many years have finally been**

realized. You will feel that only now have you truly seen God face to face; only now have you gazed upon His countenance, heard His personal utterances, appreciated the wisdom of His work, and truly sensed how practical and almighty He is. You will feel that you have gained many things that people in times past had never seen nor possessed. At this time, you will clearly know what it is to believe in God, and what it is to align with God's intentions. Of course, if you cling to views of the past, and reject or deny the fact of the second incarnation of God, then you will remain empty-handed, acquiring nothing, and ultimately you will be pronounced guilty of opposing God. Those who are able to submit to the truth and submit to the work of God shall be claimed under the name of the second incarnate God—the Almighty. They will be able to accept God's personal guidance, gaining more and higher truths, as well as real life. They shall behold the vision never seen before by people of the past: 'And I turned to see the voice that spoke with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; And in the middle of the seven candlesticks one like to the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the breasts with a golden girdle. His head and His hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and His eyes were as a flame of fire; And His feet like to fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and His voice as the sound of many waters. And He had in His right hand seven stars: and out of His mouth went a sharp two edged sword: and His countenance was as the sun shines in its strength' (Revelation 1:12–16). This vision is the expression of God's entire disposition, and the expression of His entire disposition is also the expression of the work of God in His present incarnation. In the torrents of chastisements and judgments, the Son of man expresses His inherent disposition by means of utterances, allowing all those who

accept His chastisement and judgment to see the true face of the Son of man, which is a faithful depiction of the face of the Son of man seen by John. (Of course, all of this will be invisible to those who do not accept the work of God in the Age of Kingdom.) The true face of God cannot be fully articulated using human language, and so God uses the means by which He expresses His inherent disposition to show His true face to man” (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. Preface). Through God’s words, I realized that the vision John had in Revelation is the expression of God’s entire disposition and foreshadowed how Almighty God’s words of judgment in the last days are like the flame of fire or a trenchant sword and are full of God’s righteous disposition. Only those that accept the work of Almighty God in the last days can truly understand God’s righteous disposition, and appreciate His earnest intention in using His words to judge and save humankind. I couldn’t help but feel heartfelt gratitude and praise for God, and I offered a sincere prayer, “Almighty God! Through the exposure and judgment of Your words, I’ve come to see that You are not only loving and merciful, but also majestic and wrathful. These are all aspects of Your inherent righteous disposition. Almighty God! Your words are truly precious. I desperately need to accept the judgment and chastisement of Your words to know myself. From now on, I will diligently eat and drink Your words, accept the judgment and chastisement of Your words and walk on the path of pursuing the truth!”

96. The Senselessness of Showing Off

By Junior, Zimbabwe

In June of 2020, I accepted Almighty God's work of the last days. With a longing for more truths, I immersed myself in the joy of reading God's words and watching gospel movies. Gradually, I came to understand many mysteries of the truth, such as the inside story of the Bible, the reality of Satan's corruption of humanity, the mysteries of God's incarnation and name, the work of God's judgment in the last days, and so on. I also learned that God's salvation work of the last days would come to an end soon, that the great disasters had already begun, and that accepting God's judgment work of the last days was the only path to being saved and entering the kingdom of heaven. So then, I actively spread the gospel and testified to God to repay His love. Later, I wrote an experiential testimony article about how I had accepted Almighty God's work of the last days. One sister read it and said happily, "Brother, you have great comprehension and are very insightful." After hearing this, I felt a bit pleased with myself, thinking that my caliber was very good.

A few months later, I became a group leader and was responsible for watering a group of brothers and sisters. At each gathering, when I was done fellowshiping, the brothers and sisters all said that my comprehension was good, that my fellowship was very enlightening, and that they understood some issues that were previously unclear to them after hearing my fellowship. I thought, "I only recently accepted God's work and can already water other newcomers, plus I've also received praise from the brothers and sisters. It seems that I'm better than the others." Afterward, in order to be held in high esteem and acknowledged by more brothers and sisters, I worked even harder than before. I prepared in advance before each

gathering, searching for God's words and movies that were relevant to the gathering topic. Whenever I found light from a fellowship in a movie, I would write it down and fellowship about it during gatherings. I thought to myself, "If the brothers and sisters gain more from my fellowships, they'll surely admire and look up to me more." Before long, the brothers and sisters selected me as a church leader. I thought to myself, "I am indeed better than the others; why else would everyone choose me?" I really admired myself. Later, I heard from some brothers and sisters that they had become negative because they were jealous of me. Not only was I not sad to hear this, I was very happy, because it showed that my comprehension was indeed very good. When the newcomers I'd once watered asked about what duty I was doing, I would proudly say, "I'm a church leader now." I wanted them to know that I was no longer just an ordinary group leader and that they should not treat me as an ordinary brother. During my time as a church leader, I was busier than I was before. Every day, I read a lot of God's words and watched gospel movies to equip myself. Because of gatherings and answering questions from newcomers, I often couldn't eat or rest on time. I complained a bit in my heart, but knowing it was my duty, I still went ahead and did it. During the gatherings, I often fellowshiped with the brothers and sisters about how I had suffered and equipped myself with the truth, and how I had expended myself for God. I mentioned being busy doing my duty every day, how I was often unable to eat on time, and so on. However, I never mentioned my complaints. After hearing all this, the brothers and sisters really admired me. They praised me for shouldering a burden in my duty and for achieving things that they hadn't done, and they expressed a desire to learn from me. Hearing this, I felt very happy. Afterward, I always fellowshiped like that at gatherings, not wanting the brothers and sisters to think that I couldn't handle suffering. If they felt that

way, no one would think highly of me anymore. Gradually, the brothers and sisters started to depend on me, and no matter what difficulties or problems they encountered in their duties, they hardly ever relied on God and sought the truth principles, preferring to seek my help instead.

One time, because I'd been looking at my computer and phone for a long time, my eyes grew bloodshot, itchy, and painful, my vision was declining rapidly, and I couldn't see things clearly. Someone told me that these symptoms were rather serious, and that if I didn't receive treatment promptly, I could possibly go blind. At the time, I was so scared. I was somewhat negative, and I complained, thinking, "I work so hard at my duty; why did I still get this illness?" My duty was also affected due to my eye problem. Later, someone told me about a home remedy, and my vision finally improved. However, during gatherings, I only talked about my good side, emphasizing that no matter how busy my duty was and how much suffering my eye problem had caused, I hadn't given up on my duty. I even said this was a trial from God and I had to stand firm in my testimony. But when it came to my weaknesses, worries and fears, and my misunderstandings and complaints about God, I didn't say a word, not wanting the brothers and sisters to know that I had weaknesses too. After hearing my fellowship, the brothers and sisters all admired and looked up to me, saying my experience was great. Some brothers and sisters also said, "This brother truly has stature. He was faced with such a major illness, yet didn't grow negative and was still able to continue doing his duty. If it were me, I might not be able to do the same." After hearing these words, I was extremely happy, and I couldn't help but think, "Even though I'm young and still a newcomer, my caliber is better than other brothers and sisters, and I pursue the truth more diligently than them." But after that gathering ended, I had a strange, inexplicable sense of panic. It was just like when I

did something wrong as a kid and knew that I'd be disciplined by my parents. I couldn't even eat anything, and I felt very uneasy. I couldn't help but reflect on myself, thinking, "Was that fellowship I gave at the gathering inappropriate?" Thinking of how I hadn't fellowshiped about my true self at the gathering and how I'd hidden my weaknesses, I realized that my intention was not correct, and I felt very self-reproachful.

Later, I read a passage of God's words: **"Exalting and testifying about themselves, flaunting themselves, trying to make people think highly of them and worship them—corrupt mankind is capable of these things. This is how people instinctively react when they are governed by their satanic natures, and it is common to all of corrupt mankind. How do people usually exalt and testify about themselves? How do they achieve the aim of making people think highly of them and worship them? They testify to how much work they have done, how much they have suffered, how much they have expended themselves, and what price they have paid. They exalt themselves by talking about their capital, which gives them a higher, firmer, more secure place in people's minds, so that more people appreciate, think highly of, admire, and even worship, look up to, and follow them. To achieve this aim, people do many things that testify to God on the surface, but essentially exalt and testify about themselves. Is acting that way reasonable? They are beyond the purview of rationality and have no shame, that is, they unabashedly testify to what they have done for God and how much they have suffered for Him. They even flaunt their gifts, talents, experience, special skills, their clever techniques for worldly dealings, the means they use to toy with people, and so on. Their method of exalting and testifying about themselves is to flaunt themselves and belittle others. They also camouflage and package themselves, hiding**

their weaknesses, shortcomings, and deficiencies from people so that they only ever see their brilliance. They do not even dare to tell other people when they feel negative; they lack the courage to open up and fellowship with them, and when they do something wrong, they do their utmost to conceal it and cover it up. Never do they mention the harm they have caused to the work of the church in the course of doing their duty. When they have made some minor contribution or achieved some small success, however, they are quick to show it off. They cannot wait to let the whole world know how capable they are, how high their caliber is, how exceptional they are, and how much better they are than normal people. Is this not a way of exalting and testifying about themselves?” (The Word, Vol. 4. Exposing Antichrists. Item Four: They Exalt and Testify About Themselves). After reading God’s words, I felt God’s holiness and righteousness; God scrutinizes everything and exposes all that was hidden within me. God exposes that people have corrupt dispositions. When doing their duties or doing anything at all, they involuntarily exalt themselves and show themselves off, with the aim of establishing their status and image in the hearts of others and to achieve being looked up to or worshiped by others. All of this was done under the control of their corrupt satanic nature. I realized that I always talked about how much suffering I’d endured in my duty in front of the brothers and sisters, aiming to show everyone that I could suffer and pay a price and that I was loyal to God, using this to gain everyone’s praise and respect. During gatherings, I only talked about my good side, sharing how I’d relied on God and stood firm in my testimony while ill and wanting to flaunt in front of everyone that my stature was greater than others. However, when it came to the corruptions and weaknesses I’d revealed during my illness, I kept my mouth shut, fearing that if the brothers and sisters knew my true stature, they would no longer

think highly of or worship me. Because I constantly exalted myself and showed off, brothers and sisters often came to me with their problems and difficulties instead of thinking to pray to and rely on God. Was I really believing in God and doing my duty? Was I not misleading and ensnaring people? The brothers and sisters chose me to be a leader, but I neither exalted God nor testified to Him, nor did I bring them before Him. Instead, I made them worship and rely on me. I was truly despicable and shameful; God really must detest me!

At this moment, I thought of these words of God that I'd read before. Almighty God says: **“Some people particularly idolize Paul. They like to go out and give speeches and do work, they like to attend gatherings and preach, and they like to have people listen to them, worship them, and revolve around them. They like to hold a place in the hearts of others, and they appreciate it when others value the image they present. Let us dissect their nature from these behaviors. What is their nature? If they really behave like this, then it is sufficient in showing that they are arrogant and conceited. They do not worship God at all; they seek higher status and wish to have authority over others, to possess them, and to hold a position in their hearts. This is the classic image of Satan. The aspects of their nature that stand out are arrogance and conceit, an unwillingness to worship God, and a desire to be worshiped by others. Such behaviors can give you a very clear view into their nature”** (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. How to Know Man's Nature). **“If, in your heart, you truly understand the truth, then you will know how to practice the truth and submit to God, and will naturally embark on the path of pursuing the truth. If the path you walk is the right one, and in line with God's intentions, then the work of the Holy Spirit will not leave you—in which case there will be less**

and less chance of you betraying God. Without the truth, it is easy to do evil, and you will do it despite yourself. For example, if you have an arrogant and conceited disposition, then being told not to oppose God makes no difference, you can't help yourself, it is beyond your control. You would not do it on purpose; you would do it under the domination of your arrogant and conceited nature. Your arrogance and conceit would make you look down on God and see Him as being of no account; they would cause you to exalt yourself, constantly put yourself on display; they would make you scorn others, they would leave no one in your heart but yourself; they would rob you of God's place in your heart, and ultimately cause you to sit in the place of God and demand that people submit to you, and make you venerate your own thoughts, ideas, and notions as the truth. So much evil is done by people under the dominance of their arrogant and conceited nature!" (The Word, Vol. 3.

The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. Only by Pursuing the Truth Can One Achieve a Change in Disposition). From God's words, I realized that I constantly exalted myself and put myself on display mainly because my nature was too arrogant. Because of my arrogant and conceited nature, there was no place for God in my heart, and I looked down on others. I loved to show myself off and flaunt myself in front of people, seeking their admiration and praise. Driven by my arrogant nature, I was unwilling to work in obscurity and do things in a down-to-earth manner; I always wanted to stand out from the crowd. Was I not walking the exact same path of resisting God that Paul did? When he preached and worked for the Lord, Paul wrote many letters to the churches of that time, often exalting himself and testifying about his suffering and expending for the Lord, which led many people to think highly of and worship him. Although Paul suffered a lot while preaching and working, he never testified to the Lord's words and did not bring believers before the

Lord. Instead, he brought them before himself. He never reflected on his own ambitions and motives, even thinking that he had forsaken and expended a lot for God and believing that a crown of righteousness would be reserved for him. In the end, he even testified that for him, to live is Christ, making others follow his example. Paul's nature was extremely arrogant, and ultimately, he was punished by God for seriously offending God's disposition. Comparing this to my own behavior, I saw that I also constantly exalted myself and showed off in my duty, showing the brothers and sisters that I was better than them in every way in order to gain their admiration and worship. When the brothers and sisters all thought highly of me and praised me for my good caliber and my ability to suffer and pay a price in my duty, I not only didn't feel afraid or reflect on myself, I took pleasure in it and was self-satisfied. I was truly so arrogant and conceited by nature, without the slightest trace of a God-fearing heart. In everything I'd done, whether it was equipping myself with God's words to answer brothers and sisters' questions or fellowshiping on my experiences at gatherings, my intention and motive had not been to seek an understanding of the truth, do my duty well, or sincerely help others. Instead, it was all to establish a lofty image in people's hearts and earn their admiration. This was rebelling against and resisting God! As a church leader, I ought to exalt and testify to God and help the brothers and sisters understand the truth and God's intentions so that they could come before God, rely on Him, and look up to Him. However, I constantly showed off and flaunted myself, resulting in the brothers and sisters having no place for God in their hearts but having a place for me. They relied on and worshiped me in everything they did. I was truly so arrogant that I'd lost all reason! Although I did my duty on the surface, in reality, all I was doing was harming the brothers and sisters, leading them away from God and making them worship a person. The

nature of my actions was that of offending God's disposition; I was walking the path of resisting God. If I did not repent, I would surely be punished and cursed by God just as Paul was. Pondering this, I felt scared. I realized that if I still didn't repent, I would lose the work of the Holy Spirit, fall into darkness, and be spurned and eliminated by God. I prayed to God, "God, my nature is too arrogant, and I lack a heart that fears You. I always show off in front of others, which makes You greatly detest me. I don't want to go on like this any longer. Please help me; I'm willing to practice according to Your requirements."

After that, I read God's words which said: **"Do not think that you understand everything. I tell you that all you have seen and experienced is insufficient for you to understand even a thousandth of My management plan. So why then do you act so haughty? That little bit of talent and tiny bit of knowledge you have are insufficient for Jesus to use in even a single second of His work! How much experience do you actually possess? What you have seen and all that you have heard in your lifetime and what you have imagined are less than the work I do in a single moment! You had best not nitpick and find fault. You can be as arrogant as you want, but you are nothing more than a created being not even the equal of an ant! All that you hold within your belly is less than what is in an ant's belly! Do not think, just because you have gained some experience and seniority, that this entitles you to gesticulate wildly and talk big. Are not your experience and your seniority the product of the words I have uttered? Do you believe that they were in exchange for your own labor and toil?"** (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. The Two Incarnations Complete the Significance of the Incarnation). Pondering God's words, I felt ashamed. It hadn't been long since I accepted God's work of the last days, and I was a bit enthusiastic in

my duty, understood some words and doctrines, and had achieved some results in my work, and so I regarded these things as my own stature, thinking that I was better than others and understood the truth better than they did. I even frequently used this as capital to show off and get others to think highly of me. I was truly too arrogant and had no self-knowledge. That I could fellowship some understanding at gatherings, answer some questions from brothers and sisters, and achieve some results in my work was all because the words that God expressed made me understand some truths. If it were not for God's work of the last days, the truths that God expressed, and the enlightenment and illumination of the Holy Spirit, I would never have been able to understand the truth. Whether it was in regard to God's work or to my own corrupt disposition, I wasn't able to see through any of it. There was nothing about me worth flaunting. However, I hadn't been grateful for God's watering and provision, instead attributing all the credit to myself and using it as capital to show off and make others think highly of me. I was truly arrogant, ignorant, and shameless, and without reason! I was very thankful to God for helping me recognize my own corruption, and I wanted to change. So, I continued to seek the truth, thinking, "How should I resolve my corrupt disposition and stop exalting myself and showing myself off? How should I practice in order to exalt and testify to God?"

Later, I read some of God's words: **"When bearing testimony for God, you should mainly talk about how God judges and chastises people, and what trials He uses to refine people and change their dispositions. You should also talk about how much corruption has been revealed in your experience, how much you have suffered, how many things you did to resist God, and how you were eventually conquered by God. Talk about how much real knowledge of God's work you have,**

and how you should bear witness for God and repay Him for His love. You should put substance into this kind of language, while putting it in a simple manner. Do not talk about empty theories. Speak more down-to-earth; speak from the heart. This is how you should experience things. Do not equip yourselves with profound-seeming, empty theories in an effort to show off; doing so makes you appear quite arrogant and senseless. You should speak more about real things from your actual experience, and speak more from the heart; this is most beneficial to others, and most appropriate for them to see” (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. Only by Pursuing the Truth Can One Achieve a Change in Disposition).

“Firstly, for one to appreciate problems and dissect and lay themselves bare at an essential level, they must have an honest heart and a sincere attitude, and they must speak of what they can understand of the problems in their disposition. Secondly, should one feel that a disposition of theirs is egregious, they must say to everyone, ‘If I reveal such a corrupt disposition again, feel free to alert me to it and to prune me. If I can’t accept it, don’t give up on me. This side of my corrupt disposition is very severe, and I need the truth to be fellowshipped multiple times to expose me. I gladly accept being pruned by everyone, and I hope that everyone will keep an eye on me, help me, and keep me from going astray.’ What of such an attitude? This is the attitude of accepting the truth” (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. On Harmonious Cooperation). After reading God’s words, I understood that testifying to God mainly involves testifying about how God judges and tries people, what corrupt dispositions one reveals in their experiences, what weaknesses and deficiencies one notices in themselves, what true understanding one has of God’s work and His words, and what understanding and firsthand experience one has of God’s righteous disposition. Fellowshipping on all of

these means truly testifying to God. As for me, my intention in fellowshiping during gatherings was to make others think highly of and worship me. I only talked about my good and proactive sides, rarely mentioning my weaknesses and the corruptions I revealed. This was exalting myself and showing myself off, which God detested and hated. I ought to be an honest person, open up about my corruptions, and speak my true thoughts, allowing others to see the real me, while also accepting the supervision and help of the brothers and sisters. That was how I ought to practice. After that, during gatherings, I opened up to the brothers and sisters about how I showed off and testified to myself, the despicable intention I had in my heart, and the corruptions I revealed. I also told them that I too had weaknesses and negativity and that they should not think highly of or worship me anymore. After fellowshiping like this, I felt very relaxed and at ease. After hearing about my experiences, some brothers and sisters said they had also gained some understanding of their own corruptions. Later on, the brothers and sisters no longer worshiped or relied on me as much as they did before, and even though some people still occasionally praised my fellowships, I was no longer affected by their words.

From then on, I prayed to God before almost every gathering, “Almighty God, You are the One who should be praised. I am just a corrupt person. I must open myself up and speak my true thoughts. Please scrutinize my heart so that my words and actions are not to show myself off, but to testify to You.” Thus, at each gathering, I focused on pondering God’s words and fellowshiping on my understanding and comprehension of them, also frequently opening up myself and exposing my corrupt dispositions. Moreover, I told the brothers and sisters to supervise me, and that if they saw that I was disguising myself, they could expose and prune

me, helping me understand my corruptions and break free from the control of these corrupt dispositions. I used to think that others didn't fellowship well, and I never listened carefully to their fellowships, but now I pay close attention to the brothers and sisters when they discuss their experiences and understandings. When there is enlightenment from the Holy Spirit, I note it down, and I can learn a lot from the brothers' and sisters' experiences. That I am able to practice these things now is because of the judgment, exposure, enlightenment, and illumination of God's words. Thanks be to God's guidance!

97. A Choice While in Peril

By Qin Mo, China

One winter, several years ago, an upper leader told me that leaders and workers from a neighboring church had been arrested by the police. There was some follow-up work that had to be dealt with in the church, and the brothers and sisters didn't have anyone to support them. Some of them felt timid, negative and weak, and couldn't participate in church life. She asked if I'd be willing to preside over that church's work. When she asked me, I felt a bit conflicted, "Some brothers and sisters had just been arrested at that church. If I take over the work there, what if I also get arrested? Given my old age, how can my body really withstand the great red dragon's torture and beatings? If I can't take the torture and become a Judas, betraying God, then won't all my years of faith have been in vain?" But then I thought that, given the adversity of the current circumstances, the church's work needed someone to step up in this crucial moment, so I reluctantly agreed.

When I arrived at the church, Sister Wang Xinjing informed me that the leaders, the workers, and some brothers and sisters had been arrested, and she'd only been able to contact a few brothers and sisters in the whole church. She couldn't reach most church members, so they couldn't gather. Hearing this, I thought to myself, "What a terrible situation this is. Now, the great red dragon is using our neighbors to monitor us. What if when I go and support these brothers and sisters, their neighbors take notice and report me to the police? Also, so many brothers and sisters have been arrested—if any of them can't withstand the torture and rat out other brothers and sisters, the police will be monitoring them. So, if I go see these brothers and sisters, won't I just be walking right into their trap? If I'm arrested, can't withstand the torture and become a Judas, won't my days as a believer be

finished? I certainly won't attain salvation, then." The more I thought, the more scared I became—I thought it was just too dangerous to do my duty there. It felt like walking in a minefield—one wrong step and it'd all be over. At that time, I really regretted going to manage the work there, and I couldn't get motivated to do my duty. Then I thought about how Wang Xinjing was a member of the church and was more familiar with the overall situation there, so it would be more convenient for her to go visit the brothers and sisters. I'd only just arrived and was not up to speed yet. I could have Wang Xinjing go visit the brothers and sisters, that way I wouldn't have to risk it myself. But then I thought, "Wang Xinjing doesn't have a good grasp of many principles and lacks experience. Given all this, could she really do the follow-up work well? Will she be able to resolve the brothers and sisters' issues? On the other hand, if I go personally, won't I just be setting myself up for disaster?" After turning the matter over in my head, I decided to have Wang Xinjing perform the work. But after a few days, she still hadn't made any progress. Seeing this, I knew that I ought to go support the brothers and sisters myself. Otherwise, their problems wouldn't be resolved and their life entry would suffer losses. But, given how treacherous the current circumstances were, I'd be in danger of being arrested any time I made contact with the brothers and sisters. So I just didn't dare do the work myself. As a result, more than a month went by and we hadn't made much progress in the church's work. Wang Xinjing was living in a state of negativity. But I was living in timidity and fear, so I didn't dare collaborate with her in the work.

One day, I suddenly fell ill, and the cause of the illness could not be determined. At the time, I realized that this might have been God disciplining me, and so I prayed to Him, asking Him to enlighten me so I could know His intention. Later, I read this passage of God's words: "**His**

sorrow is due to mankind, for whom He has hopes but who has fallen into darkness, and it is because the work He does on man does not meet His intentions, because the mankind He loves cannot all live in the light. He feels sorrow for the innocent mankind, for the honest but ignorant man, and for the man who is good but lacking in his own views. His sorrow is a symbol of His goodness and of His mercy, a symbol of beauty and of kindness” (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. It Is Very Important to Understand God’s Disposition). God’s words had a deep impact on me. Especially when I read God’s words, **“His sorrow is due to mankind, for whom He has hopes but who has fallen into darkness,”** I felt deeply guilty. Due to the great red dragon’s arrests, the brothers and sisters couldn’t live a normal church life, and so they sunk into despondency and darkness and their lives suffered losses. Seeing this, God felt anxious and distressed and urgently hoped that someone would consider His intention and quickly come to assist and support the brothers and sisters so they could live a normal church life. But as for me, I passed my work off to my sister to preserve my safety and retreated into my shell to drag out an ignoble existence. I was clearly aware that the brothers and sisters couldn’t live a normal church life and that their lives had suffered losses, but I didn’t step in to resolve the issue. I was being so selfish and despicable! I thought about how usually, when I wasn’t in a dangerous situation, I believed I was loyal and was able to forsake and expend myself. I would even often fellowship with others about how we should love and satisfy God. But when faced with this situation, all I could think about was my own safety. I didn’t consider God’s intention at all or whether the brothers and sisters’ lives suffered losses. I saw that I had just been speaking of words and doctrines—I was deceiving both God and people. Having realized this, I felt deeply remorseful and prayed to God, “Dear God, I’m always protecting

my own interests and have failed to consider Your intention. I am truly lacking in conscience and reason! God, I'm ready to consider Your intention and do my best to support my brothers and sisters." After that, I went to help and support them, trying to resolve their problems and difficulties.

One day, I heard a sister say, "Two years ago, over ten brothers and sisters from this church were arrested. Even now, some of them still haven't been released. The police have even threatened they'll raze our church to the ground." I was so angry when I heard that—these demons were so despotic! But I also unconsciously became afraid, thinking, "After only two years, they'd come and arrested so many more members. And they even threatened to raze the church to the ground. If the police find out I am the church leader, won't I become their primary target?" The thought of how our brothers and sisters had been tortured after being arrested made me quake with fear, "If I am really arrested, will I be able to withstand that torture? If I am beaten to death or become a Judas, won't that be the end of me?" At that point, I heard that even more brothers and sisters had been arrested, and it seemed that it was just too dangerous to do my duty in this kind of environment. I thought I might be arrested by the police at any moment, making me feel incredibly timid and scared. I prayed to God and read His words: **"Regardless of how 'powerful' Satan is, regardless of how audacious and ambitious it is, regardless of how great is its ability to inflict damage, regardless of how wide-ranging are the techniques with which it corrupts and lures man, regardless of how clever are the tricks and schemes with which it intimidates man, regardless of how changeable is the form in which it exists, it has never been able to create a single living thing, has never been able to set down laws or rules for the existence of all things, and has never been able to rule and**

control any object, whether animate or inanimate. Within the cosmos and the firmament, there is not a single person or object that was born from it, or exists because of it; there is not a single person or object that is ruled by it, or controlled by it. On the contrary, it not only has to live under the dominion of God, but, moreover, must submit to all of God's orders and commands. Without God's permission, it is difficult for Satan to touch even a drop of water or grain of sand upon the land; without God's permission, Satan is not even free to move the ants about upon the land, let alone mankind, who was created by God. In the eyes of God, Satan is inferior to the lilies on the mountain, to the birds flying in the air, to the fish in the sea, and to the maggots on the earth. Its role among all things is to serve all things, to serve mankind, and to serve God's work and His plan of management" (The Word, Vol. 2. On Knowing God.

God Himself, the Unique I). Through God's words, I realized that all things are under God's sovereignty. No matter how savage Satan is, it is still in God's hands. Without God's permission, Satan wouldn't dare make any false moves. I recalled how when Job was tried, without God's permission, Satan could only injure his flesh but didn't dare rob Job of his life. In the situation I find myself in, isn't it entirely up to God whether I'll be arrested? No matter how savage and ferocious Satan is, without God's permission, it won't get its way even if the great red dragon tries to apprehend me. If God does assent, then I won't be able to escape even if I try. My life is in God's hands and Satan has no say over it. Pondering over God's words, I gained some knowledge of His authority and sovereignty, and I felt less timid and much more liberated. I wanted to arrange for the brothers and sisters to begin living their church lives again as soon as possible. During that time, Wang Xinjing and I prayed and relied upon God. We thought of ways to contact the brothers and sisters and provided support for them. As a result,

they gradually started attending gatherings, living their church lives and doing their duties to the best of their abilities.

Later on, a sister that had been arrested and then released informed me that I'd been ratted out. The police already knew I was a leader and what village I lived in, and they even said they'd have the Security Bureau put out a warrant for me. When I learned of that, my heart leaped to my throat; I felt terribly anxious and scared. Given that the police already had so much information about me, I was liable to be arrested at any moment and any place. And if I were arrested, I'd certainly be tortured. The more I thought, the more frightened I became, and I had a temporary lapse into weakness. It seemed like believing in God in the country of the great red dragon was like walking on thin ice; mortal danger awaited me with every step. At the time, I thought, "I can go and hide out at my relatives' place for a bit. Once things have cooled down here I can continue doing my duty." But then I remembered that some brothers and sisters were feeling timid, negative and weak and were in dire need of watering and support. If I deserted my post at this crucial moment, wouldn't I be rebelling against God and hurting His heart? I felt agonized and tormented, and didn't know what I should do, so I prayed to God, asking that He give me strength and faith to continue doing my duty. Later, I saw this passage of God's words: **"In mainland China, the great red dragon has consistently and brutally suppressed, arrested, and persecuted believers in God, often placing them in dangerous environments. For instance, the government uses various pretexts to apprehend believers. Whenever they discover the area in which an antichrist resides, what's the first thing the antichrist thinks about? It's not about arranging the work of the church properly but how to escape from this dangerous situation. When the church faces suppression and arrests, the antichrists never engage in follow-up work. They don't**

make arrangements for essential church resources or personnel. Instead, they find excuses and reasons in order to secure a safe place for themselves and be done with it. ... Deep within the antichrists' hearts, their personal safety always takes precedence. It's an issue in their hearts that is a constant concern for them. They think to themselves, 'I mustn't get into trouble. Whoever might get caught, I can't afford to be—I have to stay alive. I'm still waiting to share in god's glory when the work of god is finished. If I get caught, I'll act like Judas, and it'll be over for me. There won't be a good outcome for me. I'll be punished.' ... After settling themselves down and feeling that they are out of harm's way, that the danger is past, then the antichrists proceed to do some superficial work. Antichrists are quite meticulous in their arrangements, but it depends on who they are dealing with. They think very carefully about matters that concern their own interests, but when it comes to the work of the church or their own duties, they display their own selfishness and despicableness and show no responsibility, lacking even a hint of conscience or reason. It's precisely because of these behaviors that they are classified as **antichrists**' (The Word, Vol. 4. Exposing Antichrists. Item Nine (Part Two)). God exposed how antichrists are particularly selfish, despicable, and lacking in humanity. They only care about their own interests and personal safety and don't show the slightest concern for the church's work. In periods of peace, they give people the false impression that they're passionate about their duties, but at the slightest sign of danger, or any situation that may risk their personal safety, they retreat into their shells and hide away. No matter how many losses this causes to the church's work and the brothers and sisters, these antichrists don't care at all. I realized that my own actions were no different from an antichrist's. When there was no present danger, it outwardly

seemed like I could suffer and expend myself in my duty, but when things really got dangerous, I would shirk back, only thinking of protecting myself and passing off the risky duty to another sister. I looked on passively as the church's work failed to make progress and the brothers and sisters were bereft of church life. I didn't rise to the occasion and do the church's work and only snapped out of it when I was disciplined. Once I heard that I'd been ratted out and the police were searching for me, I wanted to desert my post, not considering the church's work at all. I was just so selfish and despicable! The reality of that situation revealed that I was as selfish as an antichrist. Whenever I felt in danger, I would want to abandon my duty and find a way to ensure my safety. I didn't have the slightest loyalty to God and this was abhorrent to Him. Having realized this about myself, I felt remorseful and guilty. I read a passage of God's words: **"It is tremendously difficult for God to carry out His work in the land of the great red dragon—but it is through this difficulty that God does one stage of His work, making manifest His wisdom and His wondrous deeds, and using this opportunity to make this group of people complete. It is through people's suffering, through their caliber, and through all the satanic dispositions of the people of this filthy land that God does His work of purification and conquest, so that, from this, He may gain glory, and so that He may gain those who will bear witness to His deeds. Such is the entire significance of all the sacrifices that God has made for this group of people"** (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. Is the Work of God As Simple As Man Imagines?). Pondering over God's words, I understood that it was inevitable, and also God's preordainment, that we believers living under the CCP's rule would be subject to persecution and tribulation. God was using the great red dragon's persecution as a way of perfecting our faith and love. But when faced with a dangerous situation, I didn't seek God's intention

and felt timid and scared, only caring for my own safety and even not wanting to do my duty. I saw that my faith was truly weak, and instead of bearing witness before God, I had become Satan's laughingstock. Realizing this, I felt quite remorseful and indebted, and I didn't want to abandon my post and live an ignoble existence any longer. I was ready to submit and put myself in God's hands. I was happy to let God orchestrate whether I would be arrested, and whether I'd live or die. If I were arrested by the great red dragon, it would be with God's permission and even if it meant my death, I would stand firm in my witness for Him. If they didn't arrest me, it would be due to God's mercy and protection, and I'd be even more determined to do my duty properly. Having realized this, I felt a bit more peaceful, and my previous anxiety and fright faded away.

After that, I reflected on why I only consider my own interests when faced with danger, instead of considering God's intention. One day, I came upon a passage of God's words: **"All corrupt humans live for themselves. Every man for himself and the devil take the hindmost—this is the summation of human nature. People believe in God for their own sake; when they forsake things and expend themselves for God, it is in order to be blessed, and when they are loyal to Him, it is still in order to be rewarded. In sum, it is all done for the purpose of being blessed, rewarded, and entering the kingdom of heaven. In society, people work for their own benefit, and in the house of God, they do a duty in order to be blessed. It is for the sake of gaining blessings that people forsake everything and can endure much suffering. There is no better evidence of man's satanic nature. People whose dispositions have changed are different, they feel that meaning comes from living by the truth, that the basis of being human is submitting to God, fearing God and shunning evil, that accepting God's commission is a responsibility that**

is perfectly natural and justified, that only people who fulfill the duties of a created being are fit to be called human—and if they are not able to love God and repay His love, they are unfit to be called human. They feel that living for oneself is empty and devoid of meaning, that people should live in order to satisfy God, to perform their duties well, and live lives of meaning, so that even when it is their time to die, they will feel content and not have the slightest regret, and that they have not lived in vain” (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. Part Three). Through God’s words, I saw that the reason I continually protected myself in dangerous situations, wanting to abandon my duty and live an ignoble existence, was because my thinking was dominated by satanic philosophies like “Every man for himself and the devil take the hindmost,” “Let things drift if they do not affect one personally,” “Never lift a finger without a reward,” and so on. These philosophies became a part of my nature, and I always acted out of self-interest no matter what. I would betray God whenever my own interests were at stake. I thought about how ever since I’d come to this church and been put in a perilous situation, I only ever thought about my own safety. Despite knowing that I had to support those brothers and sisters as fast as I could, so that they could live their church life, I still hid away because I was scared of being arrested and tortured, passing my work off onto my sister without the slightest consideration of the church’s work or my sister’s safety. Even seeing that it was becoming too much for the sister to work alone, and the brothers and sisters couldn’t live their church life I still wouldn’t step up and do my duty. I was living according to Satan’s philosophies. I acted selfishly and despicably and I didn’t have the slightest humanity, conscience, or reason. God saves those who are loyal and submissive to Him, those that abandon their personal interests and safeguard the church’s work in crucial moments; only such

people attain God's approval. But in crucial moments, I abandoned ship and didn't have any sincerity toward God. Seeing how selfish and despicable I was, even if I was able to evade the police and drag out an ignoble existence, why would God then choose to save me? I thought of how, in order to save humanity, God was incarnated in China and endured incredible humiliation and suffering, braving enormous danger to express His words and do His work, undergoing constant pursuit and persecution by the great red dragon, as well as the rejection and slander of the religious world, but God has never given up on saving us. God has given His all in His single-minded quest to save humankind. God's essence is so unselfish and good and beautiful. As for me, I didn't have any sincerity toward God, and still lived according to Satan's philosophy and was selfish, despicable, treacherous and deceitful. I only considered my own safety while doing my duty and didn't safeguard the church's work at all. If I didn't repent, God would detest me and eliminate me.

During my spiritual devotion, I read this passage of God's words: **"Those who serve God should be God's intimates, they should be pleasing to God, and capable of the utmost loyalty to God. Whether you act in private or in public, you are able to gain the joy of God before God, you are able to stand firm before God, and regardless of how other people treat you, you always walk the path you should walk, and give every care to God's burden. Only people like this are intimates of God. That God's intimates are able to serve Him directly is because they have been given God's great commission and God's burden, they are able to make God's heart their own, and take God's burden as their own, and they give no consideration to their future prospects: Even when they have no prospects, and they stand to gain nothing, they will always believe in God with a God-loving heart. And so, this kind of**

person is God's intimate. God's intimates are also His confidants; only God's confidants could share His restlessness, and His thoughts, and although their flesh is painful and weak, they are able to endure pain and forsake that which they love to satisfy God. God gives more burdens to such people, and that which God desires to do is borne out in such people's testimony. Thus, these people are pleasing to God, they are servants of God who are in accordance with His intentions, and only people such as this can rule together with God. When you have truly become God's intimate is precisely when you will rule together with God" (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. How to Serve in Harmony With God's Intentions). Through God's words, I realized that God loves those who consider His intentions and bear His burdens. No matter what situation arises, no matter how great the suffering they endure, and even if the road ahead looks bleak, they can give up what they love to satisfy God and don't think about their own interests. Only such people are the ones that God will ultimately gain. In that crucial moment, when the brothers and sisters were arrested, I knew I should consider God's intention, share His restlessness and His thoughts, protect the church's work and fulfill my responsibilities and duties. Having realized this, I made a resolution: No matter what dangers lie ahead, I will do my duty well to comfort God's heart.

One day, I heard that a leader from a neighboring church had been arrested. I realized the church's books had to be transferred elsewhere quickly, otherwise they'd end up in the great red dragon's hands. So, I contacted Sister Zhang Yi right away to help move the books together. When I arrived at our meeting place, she rushed over to me with a nervous look on her face and told me that she had been followed. It had been difficult for her to finally lose her tail, and she told me to transfer the books out as quickly as possible. Hearing that, my heart leaped to my throat and I

felt nervous and scared. I thought, “The police are hiding in secret while we’re fully exposed. If the police track me down and arrest me, they’ll be surely to beat me to death!” The more I thought, the more scared I became and I wanted to have someone else transfer the books. But then I remembered that Zhang Yi had already set a time for us to meet with the brothers and sisters that safekept the books and there was no time to find a replacement. Also, the more delays there were during transfer, the higher the risk. While going back and forth in my mind, I realized that I was being timid and so I continually called out to God in my heart to give me faith and strength. Just then, I thought of a passage of God’s words: **“When those who are loyal to God know clearly that an environment is dangerous, they still brave the risk of doing the work of handling the aftermath, and they keep the losses to God’s house to a minimum before they themselves withdraw. They do not give priority to their own safety. Tell Me, in this wicked country of the great red dragon, who could ensure that there is no danger at all in believing in God and doing a duty? Whatever duty one takes on, it entails some risk—yet the performance of duty is commissioned by God, and while following God, one must take on the risk of doing their duty. One should exercise wisdom, and one has need of taking measures to ensure their safety, but one should not put their personal safety first. They should consider God’s intentions, putting the work of His house first and putting the spread of the gospel first. Completing God’s commission of them is what matters most, and it comes first”** (The Word, Vol. 4. Exposing Antichrists. Item Nine (Part Two)). Those who are loyal to God can consider His intentions. No matter how perilous the circumstances, they’re able to risk it all to complete the necessary follow-up work and fulfill their responsibilities. I thought of how in my years as a believer, I’d enjoyed so much of the watering and supply

of God's words, so now that it was time for me to do my duty, I couldn't betray my conscience and stand by while the church's interests were compromised. No matter how dangerous the circumstances, I had to find a way to transfer those books out of there. I couldn't let them end up in the hands of the great red dragon. I thought of the Lord Jesus' words which say: **"Whoever will save his life shall lose it: but whoever will lose his life for My sake, the same shall save it"** (Luke 9:24). Even if I was arrested and beaten to death for fulfilling my duty, it would be meaningful and approved of by God. I thought of how Peter was crucified upside down for God and had no concern for his own life, bearing strong and resounding testimony for God. I knew that I should emulate Peter, be loyal to God no matter what situation arose, and do my duty well to comfort God's heart. God's word gave me the faith and strength to no longer live in fear. I teamed up with the other brothers and sisters, using wisdom to evade the police, and with God's care and protection, we successfully transferred the books. Thanks be to God!

98. Lessons Learned From Attacking Others in Revenge

By Owen, Spain

In 2021, Sister Sofia and I were in charge of the church's video work. She had more technical skills and experience than me, so I'd reach out to her to seek fellowship whenever I ran into problems or difficulties. Once when working on a video, I made a pretty basic mistake, and she came to help me resolve it when she found out. While handling it she asked me, "You've been doing this duty for a while, how could you have made such a simple mistake?" I felt some internal resistance—she questioned me that way right off the bat, as if I was really unskilled. Was she looking down on me, and deliberately taking aim at me? I did fix the problem later, but I felt defiant as I did it. A few days after that, some brothers and sisters had similar problems. When summarizing the issues of work in a gathering, Sofia used my mistake as an example for analysis. I felt even more resistant to her then, thinking, "After all, I am one of the supervisors, so what will everyone think of me with your talking about my mistake in front of everyone? Will they still respect me? It seems like you are deliberately embarrassing me." I didn't want to talk to her anymore after that, and I didn't want to ask her about problems I was struggling to solve. In our work discussions I'd leave as soon as we were done, not wanting another word with her. When she sought me out to discuss each other's states, I'd just force myself to say a couple of things to deal with her, and I couldn't wait for her to wrap up quickly.

Later on, I was dismissed from my position for pursuing fame and status instead of doing real work. After a while, Sofia asked about my state and I opened up in fellowship about my reflection and understanding after

being dismissed. I thought she would comfort and encourage me, but surprisingly she said, “You’ve been more proactive in your duty lately, but your understanding is superficial. You haven’t really reflected on and understood the root of your failures. I spoke about it with another sister, and she agreed.” It was embarrassing to hear her expose my problems so directly. I thought, “You aren’t considering my feelings at all. Saying this in front of the brothers and sisters, aren’t you deliberately trying to hurt my image?” I was filled with resistance, and didn’t listen to a word she said from then on. I gave her a brief response, but I was holding onto lots of anger. I thought that since she treated me like that, I’d give her a taste of her own medicine next time I had a chance. From then on, aside from things we had to discuss about work, I did my best not to talk to her. I didn’t even want to hear her voice anymore.

One afternoon, a sister messaged in our group chat that she needed to talk to me urgently. I was working on a video and didn’t see the message in time, which held up the work. Sofia found out about that and called to ask why I hadn’t responded promptly, then said, “I see you still have the same old problem. You don’t respond quickly to messages and sometimes we can’t find you. This project you’re in charge of is really important—don’t delay it anymore....” But I felt really resistant, thinking, “I was irresponsible in my duty before, just focusing on my own work, but after being dismissed I’ve given attention to turning things around. Isn’t saying that to me just negating all my recent hard work? Are you looking down on me and thinking I don’t pursue the truth?” My bias against her grew. Sometimes when I saw that she’d messaged me about work, I didn’t even want to respond. Before long, the leader asked us to write an assessment of Sofia. I felt like my chance had come. She was always exposing me, but this time I could expose her problems and let her know what it felt like to

lose face. So I listed out her issues in detail and focused on how she was dismissive of my feelings in her words and actions, plus the ways she didn't do real work. After reading our evaluations, the leader pointed out Sofia's problems to her, and Sofia made a conscious effort to change. But I still couldn't let go of my bias against her. So once, I used the chance to fellowship on God's words in a gathering to vent the bias and opinions that I held against her. During that gathering we had fellowshiped on behaviors related to constraining others, and I thought about how Sophia never considered my feelings in anything she said, so I wanted to call her out to let everyone see she had many issues too, and wasn't any better than me. I subtly exposed her, saying, "Someone may be a supervisor and have technical skills, but can still be disrespectful in how they speak and how they point out others' problems. Sometimes they can even take a very judgmental tone, saying this and that is wrong with someone, which can make that person feel constrained in their duty. That's also constraining people, and indirectly disturbing church life. We also need discernment of this kind of person." I felt like I'd gotten to vent, but there was silence for quite a few minutes—no one shared more fellowship. I felt kind of uneasy—I was worried that my fellowship might not have been appropriate. But then I thought, everything I'd said had been true, so there couldn't have been anything improper about it. I put it out of my mind.

Surprisingly, a few days later, the leader called me and fellowshiped that I'd been judgmental of Sofia in a roundabout way in that gathering, and that this was attacking and condemning her. That could be hurtful for her, and could have gotten some brothers and sisters to take my side, becoming biased against Sofia and being unable to cooperate with her in work. It was undermining and disruptive. I was really nervous and afraid when hearing the leader's dissection. I knew that God's words say casually condemning

and dissecting someone in a gathering is disrupting and disturbing church life, and that it's doing evil. I knew the nature of this matter was grave. When our conversation was over, I found some relevant words from God right away. God's words say: **"The phenomenon of someone being arbitrarily condemned, labeled and tormented often occurs in every church. For example, some people harbor a prejudice against a certain leader or worker and, in order to get revenge, make comments about them behind their back, exposing and dissecting them under the guise of fellowshiping about the truth. The intent and goals behind such actions are wrong. If one is really fellowshiping on the truth to give testimony for God and to benefit others, they should fellowship on their own true experiences, and bring benefit to others by dissecting and knowing themselves. Such practice yields better results, and God's chosen people will approve of it. If one's fellowship exposes, attacks, and belittles another person in an attempt to strike at or get revenge on them, then the intent of the fellowship is wrong, it is unjustified, loathed by God and not edifying to the brothers and sisters. If someone's intent is to condemn others, to torment them, then they are an evil person and they are doing evil. All God's chosen people should have discernment when it comes to evil people. If someone willfully attacks, exposes, or belittles people, then they should be helped lovingly, fellowshiped with and dissected, or pruned. If they are unable to accept the truth, and stubbornly refuse to mend their ways, then this is a different matter entirely. When it comes to evil people who often arbitrarily condemn, label and torment others, they should be thoroughly exposed, so that everyone may learn to discern them. Then, they should be restricted or expelled from the church. This is essential, as such people disturb the life and work of the church, and**

they are likely to mislead people and bring chaos upon the church” (The Word, Vol. 5. The Responsibilities of Leaders and Workers. The Responsibilities of Leaders and Workers (15)). **“Attack and retaliation is one type of action and revelation which comes from a malicious satanic nature. It is also a kind of corrupt disposition. People think like this: ‘If you are unkind to me, I’ll do wrong to you! If you don’t treat me with dignity, why would I treat you with dignity?’ What sort of thinking is this? Is it not a retaliatory way of thinking? In the views of an ordinary person, is this not a valid perspective? Does it not hold water? ‘I will not attack unless I am attacked; if I am attacked, I will certainly counterattack,’ and ‘Here’s a taste of your own medicine’—the nonbelievers often say such things; among them, these are all rationales that hold water and completely conform to human notions. Yet how should those who believe in God and pursue the truth view these words? Are these ideas correct? (No.) Why are they not correct? How should they be discerned? Where do these things originate? (From Satan.) They originate from Satan, of this there is no doubt. Which of Satan’s dispositions do they come from? They come from the malicious nature of Satan; they contain venom, and they contain the true face of Satan in all its maliciousness and ugliness. They contain this kind of nature essence. What is the character of the perspectives, thoughts, revelations, speech, and even actions that contain that kind of nature essence? Without any doubt, it is man’s corrupt disposition—it is the disposition of Satan. Are these satanic things in line with God’s words? Are they in line with the truth? Do they have a basis in God’s words? (No.) Are they the actions that followers of God should do, and the thoughts and points of view that they should possess? Are these thoughts and courses of action in line with the truth? (No.) Seeing as these things are not in line with the**

truth, are they in line with the conscience and reason of normal humanity? (No.)” (The Word, Vol. 3. The Discourses of Christ of the Last Days. Only Resolving One’s Corrupt Disposition Can Bring About True Transformation). When I compared the way I’d behaved with what God’s words exposed, I felt really afraid. In my interactions with Sofia, when she had used the mistake in my work as an example and analyzed it in front of everyone, I’d felt like I’d been humiliated and I’d hated her and hadn’t wanted to speak with her. In discussions about work I’d just brushed her off. When she’d seen my issues and so bluntly pointed out my shortcomings, and even spoken to another supervisor about my problems, I’d been so angry. I felt like in an instant, she had ruined the good image I’d worked so hard to establish, and I felt such resistance that I didn’t even want to hear her voice. When she mentioned I hadn’t responded to messages in time and warned me not to hold up work like before, I felt like she was delimiting me, denying that I’d changed, and deliberately making things hard on me. So I was venting my frustration through my duty, intentionally not responding to her. My bias against Sofia got more and more intense; I was full of resentment for her. When the leader had asked us to write an assessment of her, I’d abused the opportunity to air a personal grievance, highlighting her faults so the leader would prune or even dismiss her, and I’d vent my frustration. Wanting to take revenge on her, I’d taken the opportunity during fellowship on God’s words to judge her as having poor humanity, inciting the others to discern and isolate her so I could vent my ire. I saw that I had revealed a vicious disposition. I knew that Sofia pointing out my issues was her being responsible for the work of the church and helping me know myself, but I hadn’t remotely accepted or submitted to this. I had thrown a tantrum and used my duty to vent my frustration, even using my fellowship on God’s words to attack and suppress her. By doing so, I was trying to form a clique,

disrupting and disturbing church life. Just because a few words from Sofia had hurt my pride, I'd attacked her in revenge, seeking to punish her. I was so terrifying! God's words say: **"If believers are just as casual and unrestrained in their speech and conduct as nonbelievers are, then they are even more wicked than nonbelievers; they are archetypal demons"**

(The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. A Warning to Those Who Do Not Practice the Truth). I'd eaten and drunk so much of God's word, but I couldn't even accept a few correct suggestions. Was I really a believer? I had always been following these satanic philosophies: "If you're unkind, I won't be fair" and "I will not attack unless I am attacked; if I am attacked, I will certainly counterattack." I was just venting my discontent without having a God-fearing heart at all. What I was living out was a satanic corrupt disposition, without a speck of human likeness at all. I was feeling really guilty and upset, so I prayed to God, wanting to repent and let go of my bias against Sofia. For a few days, when I had the time, I thought about why it was that we got along well in the beginning, but now I had gotten so irritable with her. I knew she was speaking the truth in pruning me—maybe she'd been harsh in her tone, but it wasn't a big deal. Why couldn't I accept it, and why could I even attack her to get revenge?

I saw a passage from God's words in my seeking: **"When antichrists encounter being pruned, they often show great resistance, and then they start to try their best to argue for themselves, and use sophistry and eloquence to mislead people. This is quite common. The manifestation of antichrists refusing to accept the truth completely exposes their satanic nature of hating and being averse to the truth. They belong purely to Satan's kind. No matter what antichrists do, their disposition and essence are laid bare. Especially in the house of God, everything they do goes against the truth, is condemned by God,**

and is an evil deed that resists God, and all of these things that they do fully confirm that the antichrists are Satans and demons. Therefore, they are definitely not happy and certainly unwilling when it comes to accepting being pruned, but in addition to resistance and opposition, they also hate pruning, hate those who prune them, and hate those who expose their nature essence and who expose their evil deeds. Antichrists think that whoever exposes them is simply giving them a hard time, so they compete and fight with anyone who exposes them. Due to this kind of nature of antichrists, they will never be kind to anyone who prunes them, nor will they tolerate or put up with anyone who does so, much less will they feel gratitude or praise anyone who does so. On the contrary, if anyone prunes them and makes them lose dignity and face, they will harbor hatred for this person in their hearts, and will want to find an opportunity to take revenge on them. What hatred they have for others! This is what they think, and they will say openly in front of others, ‘Today you have pruned me, well, now our feud is written in stone. You go your way, and I’ll go mine, but I swear I’ll get my revenge! If you confess your fault to me, bow your head to me, or kneel down and beg me, I will forgive you, otherwise I will never let this go!’ No matter what antichrists say or do, they never see anyone’s kind pruning of them or anyone’s sincere help as the arrival of God’s love and salvation. Instead, they see it as a sign of humiliation, and as the moment when they were most shamed. This shows that antichrists do not accept the truth at all, that their disposition is one of being averse to and hating the truth” (The Word, Vol. 4. Exposing Antichrists. Item Nine (Part Eight)).

I saw from God’s words that the attitude of antichrists toward being pruned is to reject it outright, to argue their way out of it, to be defiant, and even to see the person pruning them as an enemy, and so they seek out

opportunities to attack and take revenge. They are averse to the truth and hate it by nature; they will never accept it. What Sofia said about my problems and the deviations in my work was all true, so no matter what tone she took or what method she employed, it was to help me know myself, not to intentionally target me. Clearly, I wasn't being conscientious or practical in my duty, nor was I taking on responsibility in following up on work, which had led to some problems in our videos. Sofia was analyzing and dissecting these problems, in order that we wouldn't make the same mistakes again and hold up the progress of the whole work. She also noticed that my self-understanding after my dismissal had been pretty superficial, and had pointed that out to me out of kindness. This was to help me know myself better and truly repent. But with her pointing out my problems and helping me time after time, not only had I been ungrateful, but I'd thought she was intentionally shaming me and wounding my dignity. I'd really resented her and had started treating her like an enemy, going out of my way to find opportunities for revenge. I'd even incited others to isolate and reject her. My deeds were those of an antichrist. Antichrists eat up any flattery, and they absolutely love anyone who sings their praises. But the more honest someone is, the more they suppress and punish them. Whoever offends them or hurts their interests will bear the brunt, and they won't rest until that person begs for forgiveness. This causes disturbances and harm to the church's work and others' life entry. They end up permanently eliminated by God for doing all that evil, and for offending God's disposition. What Sofia said had hurt my sense of reputation and status, so I'd wanted to take revenge. It seemed like the only way for me to be appeased would be to punish her until she acknowledged her wrong and stopped "provoking" me. I was really malicious! I was averse to the truth and on an antichrist's path. If I didn't change my antichrist disposition,

when I got a position, I knew I'd do even more evil, punishing and suppressing even more people, and I'd end up cursed and punished by God. I could see the consequences were really frightening. So I prayed to God, seeking a path of practice and entry.

I read this in God's words later: **"If you are someone who fears God and shuns evil, you will feel that you need the supervision of God's chosen ones, and that even more than that, you need their assistance. If you are an evil person, and you have a guilty conscience, you will fear being supervised and try to avoid it; this is inevitable. Therefore, there is no doubt that all who resist and feel averse toward the supervision of God's chosen ones have something to hide, and are definitely not honest people; no one fears supervision more than deceitful people. So what attitude should leaders and workers adopt toward the supervision of God's chosen ones? Should it be negativity, guardedness, resistance, and resentment or obedience toward God's orchestrations and arrangements, and humble acceptance? (Humble acceptance.) What does humble acceptance refer to? It means accepting everything from God, seeking the truth, adopting the right attitude, and not being impetuous. If someone really does discover a problem with you and points it out to you, helping you to discern and understand it, assisting you in solving this issue, then they are being responsible toward you, and being responsible toward the work of God's house and the life entry of God's chosen ones; this is the right thing to do, and it is perfectly natural and justified. If there are those who regard supervision of the church as originating from Satan, and from malicious intentions, then they are devils and Satans. With such a devilish nature, they certainly would not accept the scrutiny of God. If someone truly loves the truth, they will have the correct understanding**

of God's chosen ones' supervision, they will be able to regard it as being done out of love, as coming from God, and they will be able to accept it from God. They will definitely not be impetuous or act on impulse, much less will resistance, guardedness, or suspicion appear in their heart. The most correct attitude with which to approach the supervision of God's chosen ones is this: Any words, actions, supervision, observation, or correction—even pruning—that are helpful to you, you should accept from God; don't be impetuous. Being impetuous comes from the evil, from Satan, it does not come from God, and it is not the attitude that people should have toward the truth" (The

Word, Vol. 5. The Responsibilities of Leaders and Workers. The Responsibilities of Leaders and Workers (7)). I learned from God's words that there's no malice in brothers and sisters pointing out my problems and deviations. They're not making fun of me, but are taking responsibility for the work of the church and my life entry. No matter how much or how little I understand of the problems they expose, I should accept it from God, first accepting and submitting, not dwelling on things or being temperamental and vengeful. Even if I can't entirely understand the things they say, I should pray to God and continue to reflect, or find experienced brothers and sisters for fellowship. That's the attitude of accepting the truth. I remembered how I'd exposed Sofia indirectly in a gathering—some brothers and sisters who didn't know the reality then could have developed a bias against her, which would have impacted their cooperation with her in their duties. So, in a gathering I laid myself bare and dissected my actions based on God's words, so others would have discernment over what I'd done. Sofia sought me out to talk about work later, and I opened up to her about my bias, my disposition that was averse to the truth, as well as my malicious motives. I saw she didn't seem to blame or hate me at all. I felt so ashamed. Sofia and I got along

much better again after that. When she brought up my issues, I no longer cared so much about her tone of voice—I knew if it was good for my duty, I needed to accept it first of all. Sometimes I lacked knowledge in the moment, but I'd pray to God and let go of myself, not caring about face or arguing my own case, and I'd gradually come to an understanding. Working with her this way, I felt much more relaxed over time.

Later, I worked on a video in a rush to meet the deadline, not seeking principles, which meant there were problems that required the work to be redone. A supervisor, Sister Nora, sent me a private message asking me to fix it, after which I thought it would just pass like this. But I was surprised to see that during a work summary, my mistakes were brought up for analysis again. I thought her talking about my mistakes in front of everyone was embarrassing! I started to feel biased against Nora, like she was making a big deal out of nothing and wasn't taking my dignity into account. I wanted to find a reason to defend myself, to save face in front of everyone. But then I realized that my state was incorrect, and I immediately prayed to God to rebel against myself. After prayer, I calmed down a little. I thought: The work had to be redone because I'd been cutting corners. Nora was fellowshipping on it to give me a reminder, so I could reflect on my own attitude toward my duty. At the same time, brothers and sisters could also use it as a warning so they wouldn't make the same mistake. She was protecting the interests of the church. If I made excuses and justified myself to save face, and became biased against Nora, wouldn't I be averse to the truth and refusing to accept it? I knew I couldn't keep acting on the basis of a corrupt disposition. So, I opened up in fellowship to everyone about the details of the mistakes I'd made. When I was done, they shared some helpful ways to approach those kinds of issues, and in my later video production, I followed their suggestions and avoided making the same

mistakes. I truly experienced that accepting brothers' and sisters' suggestions can prevent some unnecessary missteps and improve work efficiency. Also, it can help me know myself and be beneficial to my own life entry.

Through this I've truly experienced that it's important to have an attitude of submission when being pruned. If what the others say is right and in line with the truth, I should put aside my pride and accept it and submit unconditionally. But if I just stubbornly reject and resist being pruned, and become biased or even attack others in revenge, that's the behavior of an evil person and an antichrist, and I'll be condemned and eliminated by God if I don't repent. Before, hardly anyone had pointed out my problems to me so directly, and I didn't know myself. I thought I had good humanity and could accept the truth. Now I see I am averse to the truth and don't have good humanity. What I've gained and learned today is all thanks to the judgment and exposure of God's words. Thank God!

99. Hindered in My Faith

By Pinbo, China

I became a Catholic in 1988. A few years later, I was appointed as a deacon. No matter how busy I was, I actively attended services, and I observed the Lord's Day and the holy days. But later, the church gradually became stagnant. Believers' faith cooled and they stopped keeping the Lord's Day. People were even snoring while we recited the Rosary in services, and lots of believers went out to work and earn money. I couldn't feel the Holy Spirit's presence either, but I forced myself to attend services.

Then, in the fall of 2002, a neighbor testified to me about Almighty God's work of the last days. By eating and drinking Almighty God's words, I learned about God's three stages of work, mysteries of the truth about His incarnations, and that the church had become desolate because the Holy Spirit's work had moved on and God was doing new work. We had to keep up with God's footsteps and accept His judgment and chastisement work of the last days to break free of the bonds of sin and have a chance at entering the kingdom of heaven. By reading Almighty God's words, my wife and I became certain that He is the Lord returned and happily accepted His work of the last days. What I didn't expect was that a month later, the deacons and the priest began harassing and hindering us.

One day, a few deacons came to our house with my father. Seeing their aggressive bearing made me a bit nervous. I was sure they knew I'd accepted God's new work and had come to try to stop me. Some of them had been to divinity school, and some were teachers. I wasn't as well versed in biblical knowledge as they were. I'd just accepted God's work of the last days and hadn't understood much of the truth, so I didn't know how to handle it if they really pressured me. I said a silent prayer to God, "Oh God,

I don't know how to face them. Please guide me, give me faith, and protect me so I can stand strong." I felt calmer after praying. Then, an older deacon said to me, "You've been a Catholic for over 10 years and you're a deacon. I never imagined you'd accept Eastern Lightning. I'm so disappointed! Those Eastern Lightning people say that the Lord has returned—did you see Him? If He really had returned, how would the priests not know? They know the Bible very well—they've spent their whole lives preaching and working for the Lord and suffered so much. If the Lord returned, it's only right that He would reveal it to them!" At that time, I remembered a sister from The Church of Almighty God had fellowshiped with me about this issue. She said, "Lots of people think that the Lord Jesus will reveal it to the priests first when He returns, but is this view right? Is there any basis for that in God's words? Did the Lord Jesus ever say that? In fact, the Lord Jesus never said He'd reveal it to the priests first when He returned, or told us to wait for a revelation. And He told us: **'My sheep hear My voice: and I know them, and they follow Me'** (John 10:27). **'Behold, I stand at the gate, and knock. If any man shall hear My voice, and open to Me the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me'** (Revelation 3:20). The Lord's words are very clear. If we want to welcome the Lord, the key is to carefully listen for God's voice and seek expressions of the truth. Just as in the Age of Grace, the disciples didn't follow the Lord Jesus because they received a revelation, but because they heard the truths the Lord Jesus expressed, and recognized that He was the Messiah who was to come, and they gained God's salvation. But the Jewish leaders refused to accept the truths expressed by the Lord Jesus. They condemned, slandered, and judged His work, and in the end had Him crucified. This offended God's disposition and they were cursed by the Lord Jesus. Now the Lord Jesus has returned as Almighty God, Christ of the last days, expressing so

many truths, which are the words of the Holy Spirit. This fulfills the prophecy **‘He that has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches’** (Revelation 3:6). Many brothers and sisters who are true believers have read Almighty God’s words and recognized these words as the truth, as the voice of God, and welcomed the Lord. However, how many priests proactively sought to look into God’s work and words? Not only did they not seek and investigate, but they also condemned and judged God’s work of the last days, and kept believers from accepting the true way. They had no desire to seek the truth. They didn’t listen to God’s voice and welcome the Lord based on His words, but said He’d reveal His return to them first. How could that be?” Then, I shared this understanding with the deacons, but the words were barely out of my mouth when one of them jumped up, pointed at me and said, “You may know a fair bit now! But don’t forget what it says in the Gospel of Matthew, chapter 24, verses 23–24: **‘Then if any man shall say to you: Lo here is Christ, or there, do not believe him. For there shall arise false christs and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders, insomuch as to deceive (if possible) even the elect.’** The priest has said that all claims that the Lord has come are false, and all claims that He has become flesh are false. You’ve been profoundly misled—you’d better confess and repent without delay! If you don’t turn back, you’re at risk of being expelled, and then it will be too late for regrets!”

I was disgusted by what he said. I thought, “These deacons spend all day interpreting the Scripture for others, but won’t seek or look into something as huge as the coming of the Lord, and even blindly condemn, judge, and attempt to stop me from investigating the true way. Isn’t this just like the Pharisees?” So I said to him, “It is true that the Bible says false christs will appear in the last days, but the Lord long ago prophesied that He

would definitely return—this is a fact. According to what you’re saying, all claims of the Lord’s coming are false, so isn’t that just flat-out condemning the Lord’s return? Then how would we welcome Him? In fact, the Lord Jesus was telling us the principles for discerning false christs. False christs are evil spirits in disguise and they do not possess God’s essence, so they can’t express the truth and they can’t do the work of saving humanity. All they can do is imitate the Lord Jesus’ past work, displaying some signs and wonders to mislead people.” I thought of some of Almighty God’s words brothers and sisters had read for me before: **“If, during the present day, there is to emerge a person who is able to display signs and wonders, cast out demons, heal the sick, and perform many miracles, and if this person claims that they are Jesus who has come, then this would be a counterfeit produced by evil spirits which imitate Jesus. Remember this! God does not repeat the same work. Jesus’ stage of work has already been completed, and God will never again undertake that stage of work”** (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. Knowing God’s Work Today). **“God become flesh is called Christ, and so the Christ that can give people the truth is called God. There is nothing excessive about this, for He possesses the essence of God, and possesses God’s disposition, and wisdom in His work, that are unattainable by man. Those who call themselves christ, yet cannot do the work of God, are frauds. Christ is not merely the manifestation of God on earth, but also the particular flesh assumed by God as He carries out and completes His work among man. This flesh cannot be supplanted by just any man, but is a flesh that can adequately bear God’s work on earth, and express the disposition of God, and well represent God, and provide man with life. Sooner or later, those who impersonate Christ will all fall, for although they claim to be christ, they possess none of the essence of Christ. And**

so I say that the authenticity of Christ cannot be defined by man, but is answered and decided by God Himself” (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. Only Christ of the Last Days Can Give Man the Way of Eternal Life). God’s words clarify how to distinguish false christs from the true Christ. So, I said to them, “Christ is God’s Spirit clothed in the flesh. From the outside, Christ looks just like a regular person, but God’s Spirit resides within—He is the embodiment of the Spirit of God, so He has a divine essence and can express the truth anywhere, anytime, showing God’s disposition, and what He has and is. He can do the work of redeeming and saving humanity. Aside from Christ, no one can express the truth, let alone save mankind. There is no doubt about this. And so, the key to telling the true Christ from false ones is to see if they can express the truth, and if they can perform the work of salvation. This is the key, fundamental principle. It’s just like when the Lord Jesus came to work in the Age of Grace. He expressed truths and showed people the way of repentance, performed many signs and miracles and the work of redeeming all of mankind. By accepting the Lord Jesus’ work, and confessing and repenting to Him, our sins were forgiven and we gained a sense of peace and joy in our hearts. The Lord Jesus’ work and words were full of power and authority. He revealed God’s disposition, and what He has and is. We all know from our hearts that He was Christ incarnate, that He was the appearance of God. Now Almighty God, Christ of the last days, has come, doing the work of judgment, expressing all truths that cleanse and save mankind. He has not only disclosed so many mysteries of the truth, like God’s three stages of work and His incarnations, but He has also exposed the root of humanity’s corruption by Satan. Through the judgment and exposure of Almighty God’s words, we can understand the root of our sins and see clearly our own satanic natures, despise ourselves from the heart and repent to God, then ultimately cast off

sin, be fully saved, and enter God's kingdom. Aside from God Himself, who could do the work of judgment in the last days? Who could express all truths that cleanse and save mankind? No human could do that. These facts prove that Almighty God is the Lord Jesus returned, the appearance of Christ of the last days. All of you think I've been misled, but why won't you take a look at whether Almighty God's words are the truth? Why won't you look into Almighty God's work to save humanity?"

At that point another deacon said, "The priest has stressed time and again not to read Eastern Lightning's book because its teachings are very lofty, and many good sheep and leading sheep from all denominations have converted to Eastern Lightning after reading that book. That's why we can't read Eastern Lightning's book or listen to their preaching. It's so we're not led astray." So what I said to them was, "I used to think the same thing as you all. Afraid of being misled, I wouldn't listen to, read, or have contact with anything about the Lord's coming, but then someone shared the gospel with me. I read Almighty God's words and saw that this was the wrong approach. Almighty God says: **'The return of Jesus is a great salvation for those who are capable of accepting the truth, but for those who are unable to accept the truth it is a sign of condemnation. You should choose your own path, and should not blaspheme against the Holy Spirit and reject the truth. You should not be an ignorant and arrogant person, but someone who submits to the guidance of the Holy Spirit and longs for and seeks the truth; only in this way will you benefit. I advise you to tread the path of belief in God with care. Do not jump to conclusions; what is more, do not be casual and thoughtless in your belief in God. You should know that, at the very least, those who believe in God should possess humble and God-fearing hearts. Those who have heard the truth and yet turn their nose up at it are foolish and**

ignorant. Those who have heard the truth and yet carelessly jump to conclusions or condemn it are beset by arrogance. No one who believes in Jesus is qualified to curse or condemn others. You should all be someone with sense and who accepts the truth. ... Perhaps, having only read a few sentences, some people will blindly condemn these words, saying, “This is nothing more than some enlightenment of the Holy Spirit,” or, “This is a false christ come to mislead people.” Those who say such things are blinded by ignorance! You understand too little of the work and wisdom of God, and I advise you to start again from scratch! You must not blindly condemn the words expressed by God because of the appearance of false christs during the last days, and you must not be someone who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit because you are afraid of being misled. Would that not be a great pity?’ (The

Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. By the Time You Behold the Spiritual Body of Jesus, God Will Have Made Heaven and Earth Anew). I learned from God’s words that we can’t make blind assumptions about something as momentous as the Lord’s return. Before, when the Lord Jesus came to work, He expressed so many truths, and performed lots of signs and wonders, but the Pharisees didn’t seek or investigate this, or listen to His teachings. They madly resisted and condemned Him. As a result, they offended God’s disposition and ended up cursed and punished by God. In the last days, if we don’t have a heart of seeking toward welcoming the Lord, but just blindly judge and condemn, we’re likely to wind up on the Pharisees’ path against God. God tells us to be reasonable people who long to seek the truth. If we don’t do any seeking, but unthinkingly listen to the priests, and don’t welcome the Lord based on His own words, we’re likely to end up resisting God and being punished.” A deacon replied angrily, “Catholicism is the only true way. The Bible is all we need for our faith in the Lord!” My father chimed

in with a stern look, “Everyone’s been concerned about you being misled. Also, we’ve been a family of Catholics for generations. How could that be wrong? Why are you so disobedient?” I said to him, “There’s nothing wrong with believing in the Lord, but now He’s doing new work. We’ll be cast aside if we don’t keep up with it. Keeping pace with God’s new work is our only chance at getting into the kingdom of heaven.” But no matter what I said, it all fell on deaf ears. I realized that even though they had status and biblical knowledge, they had no understanding of the voice of God, and no desire to seek. I didn’t bother to say anything more. Seeing how resolute I was in my faith in Almighty God, they just stormed out of the house.

I thought they’d be done bothering me, but to my surprise, an elder deacon of our village fanned the flames with my parents, saying my wife and I were taking the wrong path, and told them to think of a way to get us back into the fold. My mom listened to him, then advised me, “Only you and your wife believe in Almighty God in this village. The priests know the Bible better than you two, so why haven’t they converted? Give up that faith!” She went on and on, then started crying. No matter how I fellowshipped, my mom just wouldn’t listen. After that, she kept coming to our house every few days in tears. One time around midnight, I was startled awake by a knocking on the door. Opening the door, I saw my mom, crying and yelling, “Ever since you two started believing in Almighty God, I just haven’t been able to get any sleep. I raised you all those years—why won’t you listen to me? Listen to me and come back to the faith in the Lord!” I said to her, “In the Catholic church, we believed in the Lord Jesus, and now we believe in the return of the Lord Jesus. This is the same God. The Lord Jesus’ work of redemption was just to forgive us of our sins, not to rid us of our sinful nature. His work didn’t thoroughly save us from sin. The Lord Jesus has returned in the last days as Almighty God. He’s expressing truths

and doing the work of judgment on the foundation of the Lord's work of redemption to fully cleanse and save man. Accepting God's work of the last days is our only chance to be purified, fully saved, and enter the kingdom of heaven. I've caught up with the Lamb's footsteps and found the path to the kingdom of heaven. I'm not going back to the church." But my mom simply wouldn't listen. Realizing that no matter what she said, I was firm in my faith in Almighty God, she started sobbing heavily. Seeing her in so much pain made me feel awful. I'd always been really close with my parents, but now they just couldn't understand me, and the deacons were oppressing and harassing me. Why is this path of faith so rough? How should I walk it? Then I remembered something Almighty God said: **"Do not be discouraged, do not be weak, and I will make things clear for you. The road to the kingdom is not so smooth; nothing is that simple! You want blessings to come to you easily, do you not? Today, everyone will have bitter trials to face. Without such trials, the loving heart you have for Me will not grow stronger and you will not have true love for Me. Even if these trials consist merely of minor circumstances, everyone must pass through them; it's just that the difficulty of the trials will vary from one person to another. ... Those who share in My bitterness will certainly share in My sweetness. That is My promise and My blessing to you"** (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. Utterances of Christ in the Beginning, Chapter 41). God's words made me feel ashamed. I'd hoped belief in God would be smooth sailing, that I could be saved without any suffering, but that's not reality. The path to the kingdom of heaven isn't smooth, we'll experience all sorts of oppression, trials, tribulations, and suffering. But God will use these challenging situations to perfect our faith and love for God. This is God's blessing for us. I thought of the disciples who followed the Lord Jesus long ago. They hadn't heard so many truths, but when they

faced oppression and hardship, they were able to maintain their faith in the Lord. I had the good fortune to welcome the returned Lord, to read the truths expressed by God in the last days, and find the path to full salvation. I couldn't give up the true way just because of my mother's hindrance, and lose my chance to gain the truth and life.

After that, my mom kept crying in front of me all the time, and said that she'd cut off ties with me if I kept my faith in Almighty God, and we'd go our separate ways. Seeing her this way was really painful for me. Bringing me up hadn't been easy for her. She'd been so loving toward me, always caring for me and showing me so much concern. She was already 66 years old and not in great health. I not only wasn't being filial to her, but was causing her so much distress all the time. If she fell ill, my conscience wouldn't be able to bear it. As I was thinking, I was feeling a little weak, and felt like I really owed her. I opened up to my brothers and sisters about my state, and they read me a passage of Almighty God's words: **"You must suffer hardship for the truth, you must give yourself to the truth, you must endure humiliation for the truth, and to gain more of the truth you must undergo more suffering. This is what you should do. You must not throw away the truth for the sake of a peaceful family life, and you must not lose your life's dignity and integrity for the sake of momentary enjoyment. You should pursue all that is beautiful and good, and you should pursue a path in life that is more meaningful"** (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. The Experiences of Peter: His Knowledge of Chastisement and Judgment). That's right. I knew very clearly that God's words are the truth, and that I should give up everything for my pursuit, but seeing my mother's tears and sorrow, I was restrained. I thought that as her son, allowing her to be so sad was being unfilial. But in fact, though my mother raised me into adulthood, loved and cared for me, and I should be filial and

take care of her in our daily living, my very life was given to me by God, and only God could save me. I had the good fortune to hear God's voice now, to be graced by God in the last days and have this chance at salvation. I should follow God and repay His love. The Lord Jesus said: **"If any man come to Me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brothers, and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple"** (Luke 14:26). I couldn't give up the true way and betray God for the sake of momentary enjoyment of a peaceful family life. Realizing this, I didn't feel as upset anymore.

Later, I read another passage of Almighty God's words: **"In every step of work that God does within people, externally it appears to be interactions between people, as if born of human arrangements or from human disturbance. But behind the scenes, every step of work, and everything that happens, is a wager made by Satan before God, and requires people to stand firm in their testimony to God. Take when Job was tried, for example: Behind the scenes, Satan was making a bet with God, and what happened to Job was the deeds of men and the disturbance of men. Behind every step of work that God does in you is Satan's wager with God—behind it all is a battle"** (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. Only Loving God Is Truly Believing in God). After reading this passage I realized that on the outside, it looked like this was my mother obstructing me, but behind that were Satan's disruptions and manipulations. Satan was attacking me through my filial piety for my mother, to get me to betray God and lose my chance at salvation. I'd shared fellowship with her so many times on Almighty God's work of the last days, but she never sought or investigated it. She just adulated status and power, and listened to the priest and deacons. She was so miserable now because she lacked discernment, and blindly believed what others said. It wasn't because of my

faith. This realization was very freeing and I clearly saw how evil and vile Satan is. God's work saves people, but Satan tries everything to entice people to stay away from God, to betray Him. I couldn't fall for its tricks, but I had to stand firm in my witness.

Later, I went to a church friend's house to share the gospel, but unexpectedly the priest was there. Seeing me, he clutched both of my arms and said to me somberly, "You're still preaching Eastern Lightning. If you don't repent, I'm taking you to the police." I still didn't relent. Then he said unctuously, "I'd been planning on cultivating you for an important position. I wanted you to manage all the churches in our northern region. I never thought you'd go over to Eastern Lightning. How disappointing! If you turn back now, I'll still consider making you a head deacon. If you won't come to your senses, I'm kicking you out of the church immediately and telling the other parishioners to cut ties with you. All your past efforts, everything you've done will be for naught." When he said that, I thought, he'd never talked about cultivating me before, so why would he do that now that I'd accepted God's work of the last days? The priest wanted to bribe me with status so that I'd betray God. That was Satan's trick! If I gave up the true way and betrayed God for a position, I'd lose my chance to be saved and get into the kingdom of heaven. In that case, even if I gained status, what meaning would it have? In the end I'd be eliminated and punished! I said all that to the priest, which made him really angry. Unable to refute what I'd said, he started shooing me off, "Get out of here! Don't preach around here anymore, or I'll report you to the police!" He pushed me out the door as he spoke. On the way home, I thought: As a priest, not seeking or looking into something as important as the Lord's return, and taking the lead in condemnation, resistance, and stopping believers from investigating, even threatening to have me arrested, he wasn't a true believer. Later on, when

my mother saw how firm we were in our faith, she stopped trying to stand in our way, and told us that she'd been hindering us all along because an elder deacon had told her to. I was furious. I remembered the Lord condemning the Pharisees: **“Woe to you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites; because you shut the kingdom of heaven against men, for you yourselves do not enter in; and those that are going in, you suffer not to enter. ... Woe to you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites; because you go round about the sea and the land to make one proselyte; and when he is made, you make him the child of hell twofold more than yourselves”** (Matthew 23:13, 15). There's also a passage of Almighty God's words that says: **“There are those who read the Bible in grand churches and recite it all day long, yet not one among them understands the purpose of God's work. Not one among them is able to know God; still less can any one among them accord with God's intentions. They are all worthless, vile people, each standing on high to lecture God. They willfully oppose God even as they carry His banner. Claiming faith in God, still they eat the flesh and drink the blood of man. All such people are devils that devour the soul of man, head demons that deliberately disturb those trying to step onto the right path, and stumbling blocks impeding those who seek God. They may appear of ‘sound constitution,’ but how are their followers to know that they are none other than antichrists who lead people to stand against God? How are their followers to know that they are living devils dedicated to the devouring of human souls?”** (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. All People Who Do Not Know God Are People Who Oppose God). I saw from the exposure of God's words that today's leaders in the religious world are just like the Pharisees. In essence, they are antichrists who hate the truth and make God their enemy. Before, the Pharisees madly concocted all sorts of rumors,

resisted and condemned the Lord Jesus, and misled and kept believers from following Him. It was so they could hold on to their status and source of income. Now, leaders in the religious world see that everything Almighty God expresses is the truth, and as soon as true believers read it, they recognize God's voice. They're afraid that everyone will follow God and stop adulating and supporting them. So, they won't hesitate to misinterpret the Scripture just to protect their status and livings, and they spread fallacies, saying all claims of the Lord's coming are false, any preaching of God coming in the flesh is false, so that believers won't listen to, believe, or have contact with those preaching the Lord's coming. As soon as someone accepts God's new work, they do everything in their power to stop them, even handing those who share the gospel over to the satanic regime. These religious leaders not only don't welcome the Lord themselves, but they keep believers firmly controlled within their grasp so everyone follows them in resisting God, falling into disaster, and being punished. They're so sinister and malicious! They are the antichrists of the last days revealed by God, and they deserve God's damnation! After that, no matter how they harassed or hindered me, I stayed strong in my faith and kept sharing the gospel.

Throughout the time I was being hindered in my faith, I could feel God's love. God's words guided me to overcome Satan's temptations and disturbances time after time. I also clearly saw how these priests and deacons are antichrists against God, how they are stumbling blocks keeping people from entering the kingdom of heaven. I rejected them from my heart, and remained firm in my faith to follow Almighty God.

100. What I Gained From Speaking Honestly

By Clara, USA

Some time ago, I read a passage of God's words, which said: **"Fawning, flattery, and fair-sounding words—on the surface, everyone should know what these terms mean, and individuals who embody them are commonplace. Engaging in fawning, flattery, and speaking fair-sounding words are most often ways of speaking adopted to gain favor, praise, or some kind of benefit from others. This is the most common mode of speech for those who engage in flattery and sycophancy. It can be said that all corrupt humans, to some degree, exhibit this manifestation, which is a manner of speaking that belongs to satanic philosophy"** (The Word, Vol. 4. Exposing Antichrists. Item Ten: They Despise the Truth, Brazenly Flout Principles, and Ignore the Arrangements of God's House (Part Two)). At that time, when I read God's words that expose such people, I didn't apply them to myself. Such people disgusted me, and I didn't like them or want to spend time with them, so I thought I was better than such people. Unexpectedly, when the facts revealed me, I saw that for my own interests I would do the same, trying to please people, curry favor, and say pleasant things, and I would also act in a very cunning and deceitful way.

A few days ago, I attended a group gathering. After the gathering, my leader sent a message, asking me how Brother Caleb's fellowship was. Looking at the message, I was a little nervous, "Why is the leader suddenly asking me this question? How should I answer it? If I answer incorrectly, what will he think of me? Will he think I can't even discern how well other people fellowship, that I have poor caliber, and no real experience? If so, will he ever trust me and use me in important roles in the future? I might even lose my position as group leader before long." To maintain my image

and status in the leader's mind and make him think I could discern things, I started to guess what he meant by it. Since he asked, he must have felt there was a problem with Caleb's fellowship, so what could I say to get his approval? In fact, I felt that although some of what Caleb fellowshiped was words and doctrines, in some places it was practical. But I worried I didn't see things correctly, so I didn't tell the leader my true thoughts. Instead, I said, "Caleb fellowshiped a lot of doctrines." My leader replied, "A lot of what he said was indeed words and doctrines. Be sure to remind and help him more in the future." After reading the leader's reply, I thought, "Fortunately, I didn't express my true thoughts. Wouldn't I have made myself look bad otherwise? Then my leader would have seen through me!"

Immediately after that, I attended another group gathering. After the gathering, the leader sent me a message again, asking, "What did you think of Sister Jemma's fellowship?" When I saw the message, I was a little dumbfounded. My mind had wandered at the gathering, so I hadn't listened attentively to her fellowship at all. How was I supposed to answer? If I was honest, what would the leader think of me? I remembered I heard the leader say before that Jemma often spoke of words and doctrines, so was he asking me to confirm this issue? Last time, he asked me because he thought Caleb spoke a lot of doctrines. I thought it might be the same reason this time. So, I answered, "From Jemma's fellowship, I didn't hear what self-knowledge she possessed, or which of her views had changed." After reading my reply, the leader said nothing. Then I couldn't calm myself, and I began to guess, "Was the leader dissatisfied with my answer? Did I answer incorrectly? If I did, would he think I have poor caliber?" During those days, this disturbed my thoughts from time to time.

A few days later, during a gathering, I read a passage of God's words that made me feel like my heart had been pierced. God's words say: "**Those**

deceitful people who act one way in front of others and another way behind their backs are not willing to be perfected. They are all sons of perdition and destruction; they belong not to God but to Satan. They are not the kind of people chosen by God!” (The Word, Vol. 1. The Appearance and Work of God. Those Who Submit to God With a True Heart Shall Surely Be Gained by God). I couldn't help but think of what happened the other day. When the leader asked me what I thought of the brother's and sister's fellowship, I didn't dare express my real opinion because I worried an incorrect answer would affect my image and status in the leader's heart, so I answered in a deceitful way. I guessed what my leader thought, then tried to answer in a way that matched his thoughts. I thought I would be less prone to errors doing this, that he wouldn't see through me, and my position would be secured. I thought I was clever by fooling my leader and concealing my thoughts, but God is righteous, and scrutinizes everything. God saw my deceitful intentions and tricks clearly, and God condemned them. The more I contemplated God's words, the more afraid I was. I wondered how my thoughts could be so wicked, despicable, and shameful. I also remembered how God exposed the antichrists' manifestations of engaging in fawning, flattery, and speaking fair-sounding words, so I looked up some of God's words.

Almighty God says: **“The antichrists are blind to God, He has no place in their hearts. When they encounter Christ, they treat Him no different from an ordinary person, constantly taking their cues from His expression and tone, changing their tune as befits the situation, never saying what's really going on, never saying anything sincere, only speaking empty words and doctrine, trying to deceive and hoodwink the practical God standing before their eyes. They don't have a God-fearing heart at all. They aren't even capable of speaking to God from**

the heart, of saying anything real. They talk as a snake slithers, the course sinuous and indirect. The manner and direction of their words are like a melon vine climbing its way up a pole. For example, when you say someone is of good caliber and could be promoted, they immediately talk about how good they are, and what is manifested and revealed in them; and if you say someone is bad, they are quick to talk about how bad and evil they are, about how they cause disturbances and disruptions in the church. When you inquire about some actual situations, they have nothing to say; they prevaricate, waiting for you to make a conclusion, listening out for the meaning in your words, so as to align their words with your thoughts. Everything they say is pleasant-sounding words, flattery, and obsequiousness; not a sincere word comes out of their mouths” (The Word, Vol. 4. Exposing Antichrists. Item Ten: They Despise the Truth, Brazenly Flout Principles, and Ignore the Arrangements of God’s House (Part Two)).

“God loves honest people, but hates deceitful and slippery people. If you are a treacherous person and attempt to play tricks, will God not loathe you? Will God’s house simply let you off the hook? Sooner or later, you will be held accountable. God likes honest people and dislikes treacherous people. Everyone should understand this clearly, and stop being confused and doing foolish things. Momentary ignorance is excusable, but refusing to accept the truth at all is just obstinacy. Honest people can take responsibility. They do not consider their own gains and losses, they just safeguard the work and interests of God’s house. They have kind and honest hearts that are like bowls of clear water that one can see the bottom of at a glance. There is also transparency in their actions. A deceitful person always plays tricks, always disguises things, covers up, and wraps themselves up so tightly

that no one can see through them. People can't see through to their inner thoughts, but God can scrutinize the deepest things in their heart. If God sees that they are not an honest person, and that they are slippery—never accepting the truth, always engaging in deceit against God, and never handing their heart over to Him—then God will not like them, He will loathe and abandon them. Those who prosper among the nonbelievers, who are silver-tongued and quick-witted, what kind of people are they? Is this clear to you? What is their essence? It can be said that they are all extraordinarily shrewd, they are all extremely deceitful and treacherous, they are the genuine devils and Satans. Could God save someone such as this? God loathes nothing more than devils—people who are deceitful and treacherous. God definitely will not save such people, so you absolutely must not be this kind of person. Those who are quick-witted and consider all the angles when they speak, who are smooth and slick and look to see which way the wind blows when they deal with matters—I tell you, God loathes these people the most, people like this are beyond saving. When people are deceitful and treacherous, no matter how nice their words may sound, they are still devilish words that deceive people. The nicer their words sound, the more they are devils and Satans. These are exactly the kind of people that God despises most. What do you say: Can people who are deceitful and smooth-tongued, and often lie, receive the work of the Holy Spirit? Can they receive the illumination and enlightenment of the Holy Spirit? Absolutely not. What is God's attitude toward people who are deceitful and treacherous? He spurns them, He sets them aside and pays them no heed, He regards them as of the same class as animals. In God's eyes, such people are merely wearing human skin; in their essence, they are of the same kind as the devils and Satan, they

are walking corpses, and God will never save them” (The Word, Vol. 5. The Responsibilities of Leaders and Workers. The Responsibilities of Leaders and Workers (8)).

From the words of God, I saw that antichrists have a particularly evil disposition. To achieve their own goals, they flatter Christ and watch which way the wind blows, and they even believe Christ won't see through their tricks, that they can deceive Him. Therefore, they dare to blatantly deceive God and treat God like a human being. This attitude toward God is extremely disgusting and detestable to God. Although I wasn't in direct contact with Christ, the disposition I revealed was the same as that of the antichrist. My leader asked me what I thought about the fellowship of my brother and sister, which was a very normal question, and I could just say whatever I really thought, but I had complicated thoughts, and my mind made many twists and turns. I even guessed if the leader was testing my ability to discern, and I feared if I made a mistake, he would look down on me and no longer value or cultivate me. To maintain my image and position in his heart, I concealed my true thoughts and deliberately tried to match his meaning. My behavior was just as God's words expose, like a slithering snake and a climbing melon vine, twisting and turning. By treating people and getting along with people in this manner, I was deceiving and toying with them. I was especially cunning and crafty. And when I said these words, it wasn't that I didn't know. I spoke after thinking and calculating. I did it deliberately. I even thought that God didn't know about my tricks, so I dared to blatantly lie and deceive. I had no God-fearing heart at all. I dared to lie and deceive other people when interacting with them, so if I ever came into contact with Christ, I would definitely blatantly deceive God, and offend God's disposition. Particularly when I read God's words: **“In God's eyes, such people are merely wearing human skin; in their essence, they are of the same kind as the devils and Satan, they are walking corpses,**

and God will never save them,” I suddenly felt paralyzed. God was exposing my nature and characterizing my actions. I recalled that when I interacted with others, I typically had my own motives, and observed their words and expressions. Especially with leaders and workers, I tried to guess their thoughts and match their meaning even more so, saying things that were pleasing to hear. I thought living this way was clever because no one could see through me. But God had already seen through me. At this time, I finally understood why God says He likes honest people and loathes deceitful people. It is because the hearts of honest people are simple, pure like clear water, they treat people and God honestly, and they never intentionally conceal their shortcomings or disguise themselves. Such people don't live exhausting lives, others enjoy getting along with them, and God likes them. But deceitful people's minds are complex, they scheme and have their motives for everything, and very simple matters and words become very complicated for them. Deceitful people's words and actions are all to mislead and deceive others to achieve their own goals. They reveal demonic likeness, and God never saves such people. Thinking of this, I was a little scared. I saw that my own nature was as deceitful and evil as Satan's, and if I still didn't repent, I would be eliminated and punished by God. God is holy and righteous, and those who will live in God's kingdom are all honest people who are willing to practice the truth. A deceitful person will never enter God's kingdom. Thinking of these things, I felt deep remorse, and I no longer wanted to live by my deceitful and evil dispositions. I prayed to God, saying I wanted to practice being an honest person by opening up and speaking honestly to everyone, no matter who. After that, at a gathering, I opened up about my despicable intentions and the corruption I revealed in these two matters. After I did this, I felt much more relieved and at ease.

After that, I also wondered why I always cared what the leader thought about me, and why I could lie and be deceptive to earn his good opinion of me. One day, in God's words, I read: **"No matter the level of a leader or worker, if you worship them for understanding a bit of the truth and for having a few gifts, and believe that they possess the truth reality and can help you, and if you look up to and depend on them in all things, and through this, you try to attain salvation, then this is foolish and ignorant of you. In the end, it will all come to nothing, because your starting point is inherently wrong. No matter how many truths someone understands, they cannot stand in the stead of Christ, and no matter how gifted someone is, this does not mean they possess the truth—so anyone who worships, looks up to, and follows other people will ultimately all be eliminated and condemned. Believers in God can only look up to and follow God. Leaders and workers, whatever their rank, are still common people. If you see them as your immediate superiors, if you feel that they are superior to you, that they are more competent than you, and that they should lead you, that they are in all ways a cut above anyone else, then you are wrong—that is a delusion. ... If you believe in God and follow God, you should heed His word, and if someone speaks and acts correctly, and it accords with the truth principles, just submit to the truth—isn't it as simple as that? Why are you so base? Why do you insist on finding someone whom you worship to follow? Why do you like to be Satan's slave? Why not be a servant of the truth instead? In this, it is seen whether a person has reason and dignity. You should start with yourself: Equip yourself with truths of all sorts, be able to identify the various ways in which different matters and people manifest, know what the nature is of various people's behavior and what dispositions they pour forth, learn to distinguish the**

essences of various kinds of people, be clear about what kinds of people are around you, what kind of person you are, and what kind of person your leader is. Once you see all this clearly, you will be capable of approaching people in the right way, according to the truth principles: If they are brothers and sisters, you will treat them with love; if they are not brothers and sisters but evil people, antichrists, or disbelievers, you will keep your distance and forsake them. And if they are people who possess the truth reality, though you might admire them, you will not worship them. No one can take the place of Christ; only Christ is the practical God. Only Christ can save people, and only by following Christ can you obtain the truth and life. If you can see these things clearly, then you are possessed of stature and not likely to be misled by the antichrists, nor do you need to fear being misled by the antichrists”

(The Word, Vol. 4. Exposing Antichrists. Item Six). What God’s words exposed was my state. Although I believed in God for many years, I didn’t have a place for God in my heart. What I focused on was people’s power and status, and what I upheld was Satan’s philosophy of “Local officials have more control than state officials.” I always felt that God’s sovereignty was distant to me; in my eyes, the leader was the one who decided everything for me, and whether I could be valued, cultivated, and could do my duty at all depended on the words of the leader. Isn’t this the view of nonbelievers? To gain the appreciation of their leaders and keep their positions and jobs, nonbelievers please their leaders in all things and flatter them everywhere, like lapdogs with no character or dignity. What was the difference between them and me? To get my leader’s appreciation and retain my status, I always wanted to please him, and I speculated and catered to his preferences. I was really mean and good at trimming my sails to the wind. For my own interests, I totally lost my human dignity and lacked all human likeness. In fact, God’s

house has principles in selecting and cultivating people, unlike in the world of nonbelievers. The nonbelievers practice “One accomplishes nothing without fawning and flattery.” As long as they can lick their superior’s boots, even without real talent and knowledge, they can win favor and get promoted and become rich. But the truth rules in God’s house. People are selected and cultivated based on the truth principles. If we have good humanity, can accept the truth, our heart is turned to God’s house, and we can protect the work of God’s house, then it doesn’t matter if our caliber is a little poor. The church will still arrange a suitable duty for us. If we have bad character, don’t pursue the truth, and only play tricks and scheme, even if we flatter and curry favor with the leader, we will never have an important role. Once our brothers and sisters discern and see through us, we will be despised and rejected. Even if some false leaders and antichrists go against principles and promote those who fawn and lick their boots, sooner or later, they will be revealed, so they can never gain a foothold in God’s house. Once I understood this, I no longer worried about how the leader saw me. It doesn’t matter what people think of me. Whether I can continue in my duty depends on whether I pursue the truth and do my duty well. What I should focus on now is doing my duty well and seeking the truth in my duty to resolve my problems and difficulties. This is attending to my proper work.

After that, I searched for a path of practice in God’s words and found these two passages: **“Being an honest person is a requirement God has of man. It is a truth that man must practice. What, then, are the principles man should observe in their dealings with God? Be sincere: This is the principle that should be followed when interacting with God. Do not engage in the nonbelievers’ practice of fawning or flattery; God has no need of man’s fawning and flattery. It’s enough to be**

sincere. And what does it mean to be sincere? How should this be put into practice? (Simply opening up to God, without putting up a front or hiding anything or keeping any secrets, interacting with God with an honest heart, and being straightforward, without any ill intentions or trickery.) **That's right. To be sincere, you must first put aside your personal desires. Instead of focusing on how God treats you, you should bare yourself to God and say whatever is in your heart. Do not ponder or consider what the consequences of your words will be; say whatever you are thinking, put aside your motivations, and do not say things just to achieve some objective. You have too many personal intentions and adulterations; you are always calculated in the way you speak, considering, 'I should talk about this, and not that, I must be careful about what I say. I will put it in a way that benefits me, and which covers up my shortcomings, and will leave a good impression on god.' Isn't this harboring motives? Before you open your mouth, your mind is filled with devious thoughts, you emend what you want to say several times, so that when the words come out of your mouth, they are no longer so pure, and are not in the slightest bit genuine, and contain your own motives and the schemes of Satan. This is not what it is to be sincere; this is having sinister motives and ill intentions. What's more, when you talk, you always take your cues from people's facial expressions and the look in their eyes: If they have a positive expression on their face, you keep talking; if not, you hold it in and say nothing; if the look in their eyes is bad, and it seems as if they don't like what they are hearing, you think it over and say to yourself, 'Well, I'll say something that interests you, that makes you happy, that you will like, and which makes you well-disposed toward me.' Is this being sincere? It is not''** (The Word, Vol. 4. Exposing Antichrists. Item Ten: They Despise the Truth, Brazenly

Flout Principles, and Ignore the Arrangements of God's House (Part Two)). **“God does not like people who fawn, flatter, or speak fair-sounding words. So, what kind of person does God like? How does God like people to interact and fellowship with Him? God likes honest people, people who are sincere with Him. You don't need to consider His tone of voice and expression or ingratiate yourself with Him; you just need to be sincere, have a sincere heart, have a heart with no concealment, screen, or disguise, and let your external appearance match your heart”** (The Word, Vol. 4.

Exposing Antichrists. Item Ten: They Despise the Truth, Brazenly Flout Principles, and Ignore the Arrangements of God's House (Part Two)). God's words make the path of practice very clear. In interacting with both God and people, you must be frank and honest, you must not have personal motives, and you must accept God's scrutiny and be an honest person. God's words reminded me of the Lord Jesus' question to Peter, “Simon Barjona, have you ever loved Me?” Peter answered honestly, “Lord! I once loved the Father in heaven, but I admit I have never loved You.” Peter was pure and honest. He didn't think about how to fawn the Lord Jesus, he simply said exactly what he thought. Peter's heart was pure and transparent, and he could be honest with the Lord Jesus, so he gained God's approval. Once I understood these things, I saw the path of practice more clearly, and I began to consciously practice being an honest person in my life.

One day, after a gathering, my leader asked two group leaders and me to evaluate a sister. I was a little nervous when I heard this, and started to speculate again, “My leader wants an evaluation of the sister, so does he think that this sister has a problem? Is he asking us because he wants to test our ability to discern? The leader said last time that these two group leaders had good caliber, and that he wanted to cultivate them, so if I don't see people and things as well as them, will I still be valued and cultivated in the

future?” That was when I realized I was about to engage in deceit and speculate about his thoughts again. I thought of God’s words: **“God does not like people who fawn, flatter, or speak fair-sounding words. So, what kind of person does God like? How does God like people to interact and fellowship with Him? God likes honest people, people who are sincere with Him. You don’t need to consider His tone of voice and expression or ingratiate yourself with Him; you just need to be sincere, have a sincere heart, have a heart with no concealment, screen, or disguise, and let your external appearance match your heart”** (The Word, Vol. 4. Exposing Antichrists. Item Ten: They Despise the Truth, Brazenly Flout Principles, and Ignore the Arrangements of God’s House (Part Two)). God watches what I think and what I plan to do. God hopes for me to be honest and say what I actually think without any disguise, concealment, or inconsistency with my inner thoughts. I had to practice according to God’s words and be honest with others. So, I told the leader my views. When I finished, I felt very relaxed, and I felt practicing being an honest person put me at ease, and it also made me feel very calm and secure. This was something I had never experienced. This is how people should conduct themselves. Thank God!



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